

A SCORE OF UNUSUAL STORIES

VOL. 27 NO. 3

MARCH
1909

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THE SMART SET

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**"THE
SHUTTLECOCK,"**
by NEITH BOYCE, a
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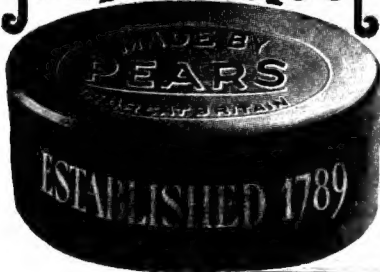
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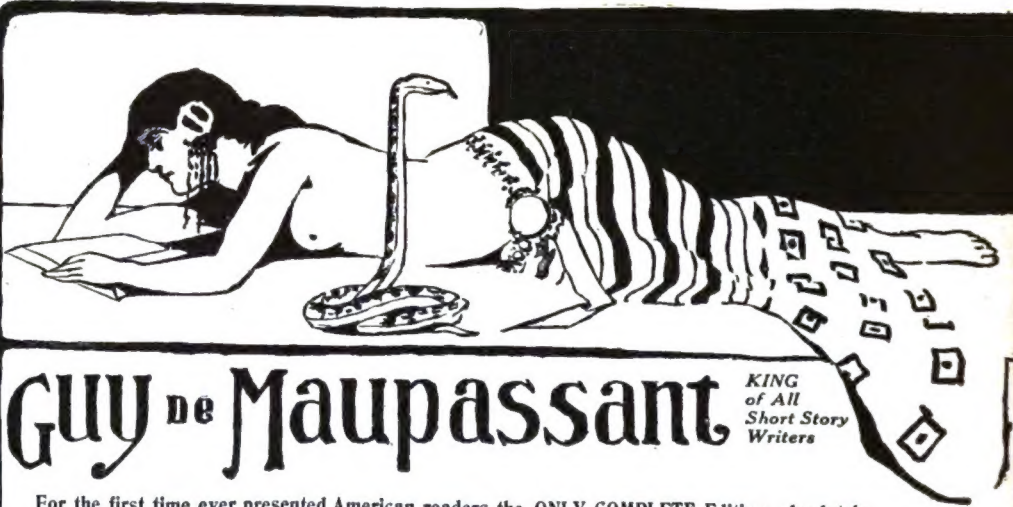
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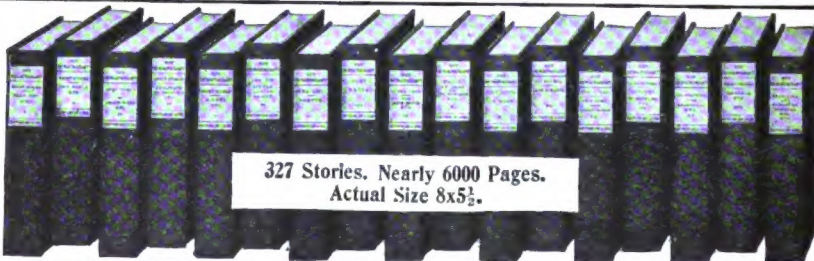
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CONTENTS FOR MARCH, 1909

THE SHUTTLECOCK (A Complete Novel)	Neith Boyce	1
THE FOOL	Violet Melville	33
A PORTRAIT (Verse)	Helen Hamilton Dudley	46
THE CASE OF GOOD OLD BERTIE	Vanderheyden Fyles	47
THE PREVAILER	F. K. Trask	54
ROSA ROSAE (Verse)	Francis Howard Williams	56
A PAYING ADVERTISEMENT	Annie Hamilton Donnell	57
EMPERY (Verse)	Aldis Dunbar	61
THE LOBSTER AND THE ANGEL	Leo Crane	62
YESTERDAY (Verse)	Reginald Wright Kauffman	69
A FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR LIMIT	Marion Whitney	70
THOSE WHO ARE NOT HUNGRY	Beatrix Demarest Lloyd	74
THE FULL-BLOWN GENIUS.	Maria Lindsey	77
COFFEE AND CIGARETTES	Kate Masterson	80
CHANCE	Charles Somerville	81
YOU AND I (Verse)	Edna S. Valentine	89
MAM'SELLE VIOLETTE	E. Crayton McCants	90
LOVE'S SEASONS (Verse)	Margaret Hunter Scott	95
THE TRESPASSER	W. H. G. Wyndham Martyn	96
MRS. MOLLY (A Play in One Act)	Rachel Crothers	104
THE DAUGHTER OF A PASHA	Mary Hastings	114
TO GALAHAD (Verse)	Alois Kirnan	120
AN IMPRACTICAL JOKE	Grace Tabor	121
THE MIRAGED CITY (Verse)	Rhoda Hero Dunn	126
LE BON MAITRE (In Original French).	Leo Larquier	127
AUJOURD'HUI (French Verse).	Gilles May	129
THE LITTLE SISTER OF DAISY D.	Theodore J. Grayson	130
LOSS (Verse)	C. L. Crittenton	135
GATES AJAR	H. G. Bishop	136
HAZARD'S LEAP	Melville Chater	139
MY LOVE WHO SECRETLY DOTH CHERISH ME (Verse)	Ethel M. Kelley	144
SOME PERFORMANCES AND A PLAY	Channing Pollock	145
THE LITERARY CLINIC	H. L. Mencken	153
THE MAGAZINES FOR MARCH		164

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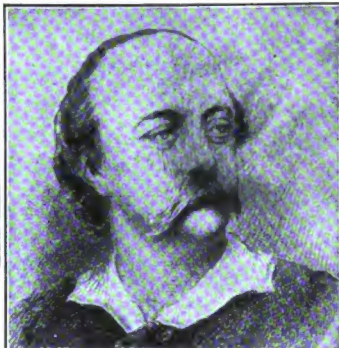
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THE SHUTTLECOCK

By NEITH BOYCE

MRS. MACKAYE was having a supper after the play. About thirty people had been asked to meet the two stars of the evening. The affair had been designed as a triumphal feast, but since the play had failed, it rather suggested the funeral baked meats, at least to Mrs. Mackaye's frivolous spirit, and she was profoundly bored at having to go through with it. "As if it wasn't enough to sit through your b-beastly play," she said to Horace Maybrook, "without bringing the atmosphere b-back with us."

Strictly, it was not Horace Maybrook's play. He had but translated it. It was one of a series given under the patronage of lovers of the drama, and for the purpose of elevating the metropolitan stage. But Maybrook gloomily assumed responsibility for it.

"The atmosphere's all right, and the play, too," he observed. "The trouble was with the audience. Hang America, anyhow! . . . Don't put me next to Miss Morrison at supper."

"Catch me! I shall hide you somewhere. She looks as bored as I feel. This is going to be a failure too."

"Oh, no—that would be too dreadful," growled Mr. Maybrook; but she had already assumed an expression of vivacious gaiety and flitted off, as more guests were arriving.

Many people, many lights and flowers, a hum of cheerful talk from a number of little tables, the air of a definitely festive occasion—these things made up Mrs. Mackaye's successes, and she worked hard for them. She hated pauses, gaps and bored-looking people. Her whole light little person was for-

ever poised and on the alert to bridge over pauses, to fill up gaps, to rout anyone who looked anything but festive out of the place where he happened to be and to propel him somewhere else. While she was talking to you, or at you, her large, near-sighted eyes were vigilantly sweeping the field. Her abhorrence of empty space (her house was extraordinarily full of bric-à-brac) extended even to vacuity of countenance, and she was disposed to take anything else than the festive glow as a real personal affront.

The dear lady thus had her social work cut out for her, since fate had played her the trick of throwing her back for her material largely upon "clever" people. She had an undoubtedly clever and eccentric husband; she was not rich enough to live with people who could afford to be dull, as she would have liked to do. Therefore her house was filled with people who were "doing things" and who were "individual." To make these more or less angular and rigid beings unbend, enjoy themselves and amuse one another was the ungrateful task to which Mrs. Mackaye devoted herself.

As a rule, she distributed her lions, arranging them with economy as the meat in the sandwich. Tonight she had Belton, an actor who had written literary and unsuccessful plays, at her own table, together with some people who were interested from afar in the stage literature. But with uncommon extravagance she had lavished on one another Alicia, the beauty, Miss Morrison, the actress and main luminary of the evening, Marvin, a critic with a name, and George Gay, who was en-

March, 1909—1

gaged to Alicia, and whose painting would perhaps have been thought amateurish if he had not happened to be rich and with social position.

In a whisper to Marvin she had confided the reason of this arrangement.

"Miss Morrison is tired and a shade more *d-difficile* than usual—and you're the only person I'm sure of for getting on with her, so do, please. Alicia is very anxious to talk to her, but she's so shy, you know, poor dear—you'll have to help her out. As for George Gay—oh, I've no p-patience with him! I know he's been drinking—now, hasn't he? It's d-disgraceful—he has no business to come to my house. And poor Alicia! I simply don't care to put him anywhere else—that's the truth; and besides, if he isn't where he can talk to Miss Morrison he'll just go away, and that will hurt Alicia. I'm asking a good deal of you."

Marvin smiled gently on her agitation.

"I'll take care of them," he assured her. "Gay isn't bad—it's all right. Don't have us on your mind."

"You're such a d-dear," she sighed, and flitted on among the bedecked tables where people were settling themselves.

With Marvin's ease and real interest in the three difficult people their hour went off very well. They were perhaps not as obviously gay as Mrs. Mackaye, glancing at them now and then, could have wished, but they were obviously interested in one another and in their talk.

Miss Morrison did show fatigue—a certain weariness of spirit as well as of body. But she showed it as little as she could help, and in a way not unattractive. The quiet of her eyes and mouth—half melancholy, half mere physical lassitude—was a real note of her beauty.

She could not be less than thirty. Her face was definitely experienced, sensitive, positive. Her fair, rather freckled skin showed some fine lines. A plain white dress left her dark reddish hair and red-brown eyes to make their own effect of color. She was, on

the father's side, of Jewish race, and showed it mainly in a look of intense vigor and vitality. The wonderful thickness of her hair, the strong line of her arched brows, the fulness of her wide-set eyes and their heavy lids—all spoke of a foreign strain in her, something stronger and warmer than her English blood. A keener intelligence, too, was behind her quiet, rather hesitating manner and low voice. She made no social effort. She was obviously bored by the occasion, by having to meet a number of chatting people, and to pretend to eat unsubstantial food. She was there for business reasons; the same frank egotism inspired her interest in Marvin and in his impressions of the play. He condemned it and she agreed with him, and agreed, too, with his estimate of her own performance, which was not flattering.

"I knew I wasn't making much of it," she admitted; "not even as much as I could see in the part myself. It was a failure—and I'm awfully sorry, for Kleber was there—came just to see me."

"Well, he'll have to come again," said Marvin. "Some of your friends will manage that. I can't, of course—I'm *persona non grata* to all of his ilk—but somebody must. The next play gives you a better chance."

"Oh, yes, the Russian play. It has more feeling, more reality. I like it."

"Then you're sure to do it beautifully," said Gay. "You can't help your moods, in spite of all that theory about technique carrying you through an unsympathetic role."

Miss Morrison regarded him seriously. "I never said I shouldn't do a character that interested me better than one that didn't. But I can't afford to let moods make my line for me. All I said was that I ought to be able to do any character that had anything in it—provided, of course, that it hadn't too much." And she smiled, with the first gleam of lightness, and looking at Alicia, added, "I suppose it was rather dreadful tonight, wasn't it?"

"Oh, it was very interesting—every-

thing I've seen you in has been, to me," Alicia said quickly, with the almost timid air that so oddly accompanied her stateliness. "But I wanted to ask you, did you feel that the Maeterlinck play had any reality in it, or any real feeling? You played it as if you felt it—and yet it seems such a strange, far-away thing—"

Her gray eyes looked out under knitted dark brows with all the appeal of her effort after the intellectual.

"Oh, I think it is full of feeling! Its reality is just the reality of—well, primitive emotions. What could be more real than love and jealousy and misunderstanding and death? Of course, the expression is sometimes symbolic—it's a kind of picture writing—but I think the meaning is perfectly clear, don't you?"

Alicia's intensity of attention became rather strained; she, as well as Miss Morrison, looked across the table, with a deferential clearing of the field for the heavy masculine batteries. George Gay declined the action, however, simply saying, with a smile:

"It was clear and it was exquisite. I wish I could get that quality into my picture of you. Or, rather—no—I like it best as it is. By the way, you won't forget you promised me a sitting tomorrow?"

"Oh, tomorrow—I'm afraid I have some engagement in the morning. Shall I telephone you about it?"

"But please try to come. I'm so awfully anxious to get on with it, and who knows how soon you may be going away?"

Gay was rather flushed and his eyes were hazily bright. The emotional appeal in his voice, his manner, his look at Miss Morrison—and he scarcely looked at anyone else—was so plain that it fairly embarrassed matters. Miss Morrison, with a cold look at him, said, "Very well, I'll try to come," and turned to Marvin with a question about the Russian author of the play in which she was next to appear. Alicia's color rose faintly. She looked away, the desire for flight showing in her eyes. Except for these gray,

black-lashed eyes, her face, in fact, was not expressive. Its handsome lines were conventional, its whole effect virginal and slightly, very slightly, withered. For Alicia, without having tasted life, was a year or two older than Miss Morrison.

II

ALICIA was staying with Mrs. Mackaye. She was fond of descending from her Western home upon New York; and Mrs. Mackaye was very fond of her. The two met in Alicia's room at the end of the evening, with the usual dressing gown preparation for talking things over, but not in the dressing gown mood. Stella Mackaye was relaxed enough and critical enough, but pre-occupation with something she couldn't be the first to speak of interfered with her usual detailed retrospect. She summed it all up in her own way:

"Well, it was deadly, wasn't it?"

"Deadly? What was?" deprecated Alicia, who in her Chinese blue robe, in the soft light of the fire, looked touchingly lovely and gentle.

Neither woman had taken down her hair—in fact, neither had enough to take down, except in strict retirement. Their intimacy had these useful reserves, which extended also to their speech. There, too, the general decorative effect was easily observed. Mrs. Mackaye, in a loose, white, frilly gown, drooped against a pile of cushions, and her large blue eyes were childlike in their weariness and pathos.

"I was so bored," she wailed, "and so was everyone else. They went home so early. So were you—confess it; only you couldn't go home, poor dear."

"I wasn't for a minute. You know how much I was interested in Miss Morrison. And she is interesting—if she'd only talk more. She must be tremendously clever."

"Did you think so? Well, she is, I've heard people say. Stuart Marvin, for example, says she's the best-read woman he knows. I don't dare talk to her myself—I've a feeling she thinks

I'm an idiot. She looks at me when I'm talking with a kind of strained air of attention—like p-polite foreigners when you're trying to speak their language. And then she hasn't any small-talk—she's always serious, and I must say I think she's an awful egotist. She isn't interested in anything but herself, or her p-profession, apparently—unless it's books. Now, what did she talk about tonight?"

"Well, it was plays, mainly, I think. The one tonight, and Maeterlinck, and a play Mr. Belton had written, and one Mr. Marvin had written—"

"Well, it couldn't have b-been very amusing for you."

"But it was. You don't know what a pleasure it is to me to hear clever people talk—people who are doing something, you know. I always feel when I come to New York, and especially at your house, that I'm really in things. I wish I had such people at home. Of course, there are some—only I don't seem to get hold of them. I suppose there's no reason why they should be interested in me."

"Isn't there? Well, so much the worse for them. You're worth the whole lot of them. It isn't only your beauty and sweetness, but you're really *human*. I'm so tired of people who have no insides except b-brains—and not enough of those to make up, to *my* m-mind. There wasn't a single person here tonight, except, perhaps, Stuart Marvin, that I care a rap about, or that cares anything about me—" Suddenly her eyes filled with tears and she gave a hysterical gasp. "I'm so t-tired," she said.

"You must go to bed, dear," Alicia murmured in alarm, venturing on a vague caress. Stella caught at the gentle hand and drew it under her cheek.

"Oh, I'm not tired *that* way—at least, not so very. But I'm so, so weary of everything and everybody. And I'm so lonely. . . . I hope when you're m-married, Alicia, you won't be in love with your husband."

"But of course I shall be," said Alicia, half laughing and blushing viv-

idly. "Why else should I want to marry?"

"Oh, it makes everything else seem so flat and stale—I mean when things go wrong between you. When they go right—while they do—of course you're in heaven. But if you can't *stay* there, I think it's b-best not to begin."

Stella sat up and dried her eyes, keeping, however, in the strength of her hunger for the touch of love, a resolute hold of the friendly hand.

"How did George like it?" she asked abruptly.

It was a name just now difficult to mention between them, and yet not to be avoided. Alicia responded with an effort at ease and lightness:

"Oh, he liked it. He likes anything where Miss Morrison is just now, I think. He's like that, you know, when he's in love."

"Oh—in love! Isn't that a little strong?"

"No, it is that. He gets absorbed, wrapped up in a person. It was always happening, all the years I knew him before we were engaged. But this is the first time it's happened since."

"Well, if he's always doing it you won't worry. It c-can't be serious."

"I'm not sure. It seems terribly serious, at the time. He never had it for me, you know."

"So much the better. You don't want the easy sort of thing. But I remember when you were first engaged. I hadn't any d-doubt then of his feeling about you. I don't doubt it now, either, only he is so—"

Alicia moved uneasily. "Oh, he cares for me. I do think he cares as much as he ever has. But I know what you mean about him. He is—susceptible."

"Yes, that, and—well, v-volatile. That's what I used to call him—" Stella made a light upward gesture. "Up in the air, you know. One doesn't know exactly where he is—and he doesn't know, either, part of the time. But it's all right—he can't help landing all right, with *you*, Alicia, dear."

"Oh, I have always, always cared

so much more," said the girl. "Ever since we were children together, I think, really. And I'm willing it should be so. I think he cares for me as much as he ever has for anyone. Perhaps he will never care as I do. But I want to give—"

Alicia stopped, her soft gaze fixed on the fire, as though she had forgotten her companion, as though she had been thinking aloud. Stella gazed at her with hushed wonder. Never before had Alicia spoken out. And the emotion of the evening, which had carried her out of her usual defenses, glowed now with such a still intensity in her eyes that Stella dropped her own, as though she had surprised something too intimate to be looked upon.

They were very quiet after this, and in a few minutes Stella got up and went to her own room. They kissed one another good night with real tenderness and each later wept in the darkness on her lonely pillow—Stella longing after the man she could neither live with nor without; Alicia worn out by the nervous strain of the day, and torn by jealousy, the reaction from her recent exaltation.

III

As for George Gay, the morning on which he was expecting Isabel Morrison at his studio, and on which, after waiting nearly an hour beyond the time set, he finally received her there, might have contained for him no other person in the world. He concentrated on her from the moment she entered an absolute interest and regard which scarcely allowed his eyes to leave her face for a moment. She came alone, in the black walking dress and plumed hat which appeared roughly on the ready canvas, and with a word of explanation went to her seat in the old Italian chair on the dais.

"I'm late, but a reporter came and I had to see him."

"You didn't mind making me wait," said George moodily, with no move to take up his palette.

"Why, that was business—that was my bread and butter." Miss Morrison

regarded him with calm astonishment. "I'm sorry you waited, but, after all, you know—"

"I've nothing else to do? That shows how seriously you take me—and my work."

"Aren't you just a little bit unreasonable? I take your work as seriously as possible, else I shouldn't have come at all this morning, for I'm very busy. I want it to be a success."

"Yes, I see you do. But if there's to be any chance of a success with it, you must be interested. You must be willing to make some sacrifices to help me. You must—yes, you must make me a little happier. Do you suppose I can work with my nerves upset as they are now?"

"Oh, I don't believe in that at all—not one bit," said Miss Morrison emphatically. "That shows how serious *you* are. If you cared much about your work you wouldn't bother about nerves. Here am I—there's your picture. Don't waste any more time, I beg of you."

"Yes, there you are," murmured George.

He looked from her to the canvas, and picked up his palette and brushes as an excuse for looking longer. She sat in a quiet, easy pose, her bare hands lying in her lap, her head resting against the topaz leather of the chair back and framed by the worn brown and gilt of the old wood. Seeing him apparently ready to begin work, she turned her head slightly and looked past him, as the pose required.

Seen thus she was incentive enough to work, or, for that matter, excuse enough for neglecting the obvious task. Her beauty was perhaps more open to doubt in this trial of the cold morning light, though her best points—her hair and eyes, and the grace and proportion of her body—came out strongly. But it was not a question of color or form that would most have interested even the painter. She was a distinct and picturesque type; she was a person, a character. And in this view the fact that her delicate skin was too pale, its freshness gone, the lines in her face too visible now, her whole definite look of

experience, of having been used, *épuisée*, even, at times, to the last drop of her strength—all this made just part of her fascination, personal as well as pictorial. She was trained, she was sure, as her whole manner, speech and action showed. She was a person who had in a way arrived. She might never arrive in the sense of popular success, and, indeed, it was the opinion of most people who knew her that she never would. But she had, at any rate, envisaged her world rather completely.

It was, perhaps, this cool limitation of her vision to what was perfectly clear and defined that had most helped to fix her attraction for George. George had lived in a world of sensation as warm as it was vague—in a world of which the realities were shifting and the willful illusion the only constant thing. Her first charm for him had been physical—the attraction here, too, of a sure grace that had been proved and knew itself. She was without coquetry, to him, at least, so far. But her feminine value, developed and formed partly by her profession, partly by a life of which George knew few details, made itself instantly felt. She was first of all a charming woman. She had the appeal, too, of having been, so far, wasted. She had been married, George knew, and divorced, apparently in the casual stage fashion. But there was nothing in the least casual about her. She had been beaten and shaped by hard experience—the bitter realities of poverty, failure, unhappiness, of which George knew nothing for himself. Compared with her, he was still in the soft clay stage, with perhaps not even enough consistence for the potter's hand.

Yet, if he could not keep the mold, he could be definite enough at times in desire and in expression. Isabel Morrison knew perfectly well, as she could not help knowing, her effect on him; but his emotion for her was no more obvious than her refusal to take it in the least seriously. She was not exactly a humorous person. She treated him, not lightly, but rather coldly, standing aloof from his increasing interest and ignoring his attempts at a deeper intimacy.

Isabel was not an easy person to know, nor to get on with, either in friendly or business relations; and the difficulties made for her by this temperament were what had mainly, so far, stood in the way of her practical success.

She sat now quite silent, evidently absorbed in her own affairs. Her expression of meditative, rather melancholy, detachment was exactly what the painter had wanted to give his portrait; yet he was not getting on with it, further than mixing some colors on his palette for which he had no use.

"Will you have a cigarette?" he asked suddenly.

He brought her one, lit one himself, and sat down on the edge of the dais.

"Do you mind if I talk to you a few minutes?" he inquired nervously.

"I don't mind—except that we haven't much time, and I can't come again this week. We're rehearsing every morning from now on."

"Well, I can't help it. I must talk to you. You must see that I'm infernally miserable."

"Oh, don't make love to me!" said Isabel gravely. "You'd much better try to paint."

"I'm not making love to you. I don't know what the devil you're doing to me, though."

"Oh, if you're going to make me responsible—"

She looked unmistakably irritated and made as if to rise. George seized her hand, which she promptly withdrew, and turned up to her a pale, agitated, pleading face.

"Why is it you act as if you dislike me now?" he demanded. "You liked me at first; you were interested in me, a little, at least. And now, when I'm so deeply interested in you—"

"I don't want you to be deeply interested in me—there's no use in it," said Isabel. "You've made trouble already; you've made that nice girl, Miss Talbot, unhappy. I don't want that sort of thing."

"You aren't so careful about other men," said George angrily. "You don't object to their interest—"

"Whom do you mean? The things you say—" Isabel murmured, and this time she definitely got up, with a look that seemed to put him a hundred miles away.

"Don't be angry! I beg your pardon," he cried precipitately. "But whenever I go to see you it seems to me I find Marvin or Mackaye there—until he went away. Did you send him?"

"How silly of you! Men like those two can take care of themselves. They do the right thing. Do you think they behave as you do?"

"And you think I can't take care of myself? I do the wrong thing? Well, perhaps I do. But you don't understand me. I don't see why you can't care for me a little. I don't see what harm it would do. . . . Now I've driven you away! Do forgive me. I suffer more than you do by it. I'm not going to see you again for some time. Do you hate me?"

Isabel laughed and put out her hand to him. "You need a guardian," she said. "You'd better hurry up and marry that handsome Miss Talbot—she'll look after you. What a lot of trouble people like you make in the world! Interesting, though—it wouldn't be so complete a world without you."

And she left him alone in the bare room, the few furnishings of which—heavy old Italian pieces and dim ecclesiastical embroideries—showed his taste, as the canvases standing against the walls or stacked in corners proved his industry. And more, these last represented a desire which, in presence of the other things—his familiarity with the best of art in its kind—proved equally a real vitality, a real force of individuality in him, however uncertain its expression. It was this, combined with a sensuously sensitive, though not passionate temperament, that made him, as Isabel said, "interesting."

IV

THE thing that made Gay problematical and rather dangerous—the force and uncertainty of his impulses—was

a good deal of a torment to himself. He had been in the past so constantly tossed about and unsure that he rather welcomed any circumstance that helped to keep him stable, even when it came as a check to his temporary desire. For he distrusted the desire—even this present one, the strongest, it seemed to him, of his life. Thus his first feeling, when Isabel had left him, was curiously like relief. He was glad to be left, glad not to have committed himself absolutely; and in this mood he was even happy in going to lunch with Alicia. He wished to be faithful to her if he could. He would have liked to be anchored to her by a cable warranted to withstand all strain. But, as it was, he couldn't feel in the least anchored. All he seemed to be able to calculate upon was, in any impulse that carried him away from Alicia, the rebound that took him back to her.

The luncheon hour was one o'clock, but Alicia had asked him to come as early as he could. He wished, as he walked about the studio and smoked nervously, that he could go backed up by the consciousness of a good morning's work. If he had been able to get on with the portrait—which he wanted to send to a spring exhibition—it would have been something at least to set on the right side of the account, which George was perpetually going over. But, apparently, he could not get on with either the picture or Isabel herself. To stop thinking about her, he put on his hat and coat and went uptown, finding himself at last in Mrs. Mackaye's decorated drawing-room with half an hour for Alicia alone.

She was waiting for him, looking very sweet and young in a dress of soft blue. Alicia, pathetically enough, tried to recapture for him as much as possible of her first bloom; she made her dress definitely more youthful, tamed her regal head to something almost girlish, coiling her hair loose and low; and her manner to her lover corresponded in softness and submissiveness. And, alas! she did the

wrong thing. George preferred her infinitely when she was most the woman. He liked best her most stately and formal dress, and her manner in her own world—a perfectly conventional and to her uninteresting world, but one she knew. He liked her best when she seemed sure. He would have liked her much more if she had seemed sure of him.

She blushed deeply when he kissed her—but then, as always, she turned, at the other end of the small sofa before the fire, and asked a deliberately unemotional question:

"Have you had a good morning? It's nice of you to come away early."

"Not at all nice of me. It never is, of course, and this morning less than usual. I haven't done a stroke of work."

"Oh, Miss Morrison didn't come, then?"

"Yes, she came—after eleven o'clock, when I'd given her up. And she stayed only half an hour or so. Of course, I couldn't do much with that. I believe I'll chuck the thing."

"Chuck what thing?"

"Oh, the picture. She's so uncertain—and I am too."

He bent forward with his elbows on his knees and rubbed his eyes wearily.

"I'd like to chuck it altogether—painting, I mean—and go abroad and live."

"Well, why shouldn't you?" asked Alicia.

He waited a moment. "Why shouldn't we, you mean? Oh, you wouldn't like it! You'd be bored with me if I had nothing to do, and I should be deadly bored with myself."

He gazed gloomily at the fire, and Alicia at him, bewildered and hurt to see again for how little their marriage seemed to count in his life, compared with what it meant to her. Then, as he looked up, her eyes fell.

"You could paint over there," she said tremulously.

George sprang up and walked to the windows and back.

"That's not what I want. I want to make a complete change, sweep

everything away, begin over again!" he cried. "Everything has gone wrong so far. I haven't done what I might have done. And I never can do it if I go on this way—"

"I don't understand you," murmured Alicia.

"No, no, you don't understand."

"Do you mean—you want to give up painting? I don't see why you shouldn't do exactly what you want."

"Yes, yes, but what the devil do I want?"

He paused in his restless walk about the room and looked at her. With his thick blond hair rumpled, his gray eyes brilliant, his broad shoulders hunched as though for a spring, he suggested a handsome cat which had been stroked very much the wrong way, and had accumulated an undue amount of electricity. Alicia looked alarmed, hurt, miserable.

"Perhaps you want some luncheon," observed a cool voice in the doorway.

Mrs. Mackaye came into the room, taking off her gloves, very trim, tailor made and frigid.

"It's just ready—shall we go out?"

It was not a gay meal. George and his hostess sparred rather viciously, while Alicia was painfully silent. George resented her silence, her inability to carry the thing off, and even the fact that she had taken so seriously what she should have taken as merely a mood in him. After luncheon she still further displeased him by declining to walk in the park, on the plea of a headache. He divined that she was going to lock herself in her room and cry and he was strongly irritated by her unreasonableness. Irritation was expressed, with him, by extreme coldness and indifference.

"I'm sorry you won't come out, but perhaps it's as well. Neither of us seems in a very good mood," he said loftily, and took his leave.

He went straight down to the small hotel where Miss Morrison stopped, and was told in the rather dingy office, after some uncomfortable delay, that she was resting and could see no one. He sent up a note: "May I come back

at four? I must see you." After another long wait the penciled answer came back: "If you must."

George spent the intervening hour at his club, smoking, turning over a newspaper which he could not read, and staring out the window at the quiet side street. Two or three men spoke to him, and he answered briefly and vaguely. At four he was in Isabel Morrison's little sitting room. It was at the back of the house, and the windows looked out on a space of dirty yards and the draped fire escapes of a tenement. The room had a faded carpet and plush furniture and portières. There was a row of books on the sham mantelpiece, and on a table the armful of roses which George had sent the day before.

In a moment Isabel came, fresh from her sleep, with color in her cheeks, her mass of hair rather carelessly rolled up and a vivid look which lit up her smile for him. She wore a white dress—white always made her look younger.

"What *must* you see me about?" she asked, not without a touch of malice. Whether or not she had deliberately made herself as attractive as possible for him, whether his presence had anything to do with her glow of life, George could not have guessed; even if at that moment he had been preoccupied with the question of her feeling for him instead of with his for her. He caught his breath with the intensity of his certainty, the keenness of his realization of her enduring charm.

"Because I love you," he said solemnly.

"You love me—oh, is that all?" and Isabel laughed. "Well, shall I ask you to sit down? There's nothing to say after that, I suppose."

"There's a good deal to say."

"Not about that. But we can talk of something else."

"I can't," George declared. "Nor think of anything else. Do you know that you haven't been out of my mind once for weeks? I'm simply possessed. I've known all along that I wanted you tremendously, but I didn't know till today that it was forever, eternally, that I wanted you, and want you—"

He poured it all out in a breath, in a low voice, agitated and broken. Then he tried to take her hands, but Isabel moved back. She looked at him straight and piercingly.

"Well, what of it?" she said at last gravely. "Do you think I love you?"

"I don't know, but I think I could make you love me. . . . But even if you don't now, I want you—for always. I want to marry you."

Isabel, after looking at him a moment longer, moved away to the window, and there said, with her face half averted, "I thought you were going to marry Miss Talbot."

"I'm going to marry you, if you'll take me," said George.

Another pause ensued. "You'd much better marry her. She's in love with you—she loves you more than I ever should. She's a good, sweet person—"

"But I want you. I would rather have you, if you cared for me only a little, than all the other women in the world."

"But I shall never love you that way. . . . Have you broken absolutely with her? If not, go back to her—have it out. Have you quarreled? If that's it, you'd better go make it up."

He went over to her.

"We haven't quarreled—it wasn't a quarrel. It was that she couldn't help seeing, I suppose, how I felt towards you. I haven't told her—it hasn't come yet—"

"Then your engagement—you are still— Well, what does this mean, then? I rather think you should clear things up a bit. Or do you want to marry us both?"

"What does it matter—I mean about the form of breaking it off? I shall tell her now at once. Won't you say something to me? Won't you care for me—a little?"

He took her hands now and kissed them passionately, and tried to draw her to him, but she shook her head.

"Go back to Miss Talbot," she said clearly. "You haven't made things straight with her. When you do, you'll probably find that you prefer

her, after all. At any rate, that's the first thing. No, I won't tell you that I love you. Why should I? I don't. Good-bye. I can't talk about it any more. There's been rather too much as it is."

"But, at least," he pleaded, "you don't care for anyone else. You told me you didn't—"

"No, I don't. There isn't anyone else to care for. My life is rather a lonely one."

"And you never have? Tell me, Isabel, more about it, about your life. You're so silent—I don't feel I know anything about you. Tell me about your marriage, will you?"

"Oh, I have told you," she said rather impatiently. "I don't want to talk about it now. You must go away, please."

For the first time now, as she looked at him, there was a touch of emotion in her manner. Her usual clearness was troubled slightly. And that was enough to send George away happy. He too was troubled, confused, excited, but more than all, he was happy. She did not love him, but she might. She doubted him—but her enigmatical eyes seemed to tell him to prove himself. Thus he was sent back to Alicia.

V

STELLA MACKAYE, for the first time, found herself counting the days of Alicia's visit, and heartily wishing that the week before her were at an end. She loved Alicia, but she did not love problems, nor situations, nor tragedies. And Alicia, from the seriousness with which she took life, was fairly sure to be involved in at least problems and situations. Stella Mackaye began to fear now that something like a tragedy was impending. No one could help seeing how Alicia cared for George, nor how—in what a different way—he cared for her. Stella's ideas of the impropriety of his late conduct were only slightly modified—for she was just—by her knowledge of the history of the whole affair. It had really begun some ten

years since, when George had just come out of college and Alicia had been a year or so in society. At least, Alicia confessed to having been in love so long; and even to having been the moving force in the engagement. She had routed George out of his bachelor defenses, not indeed by a bold frontal attack, but rather by insidious sapping and mining.

It had really been a definite siege; but, unfortunately, though George had capitulated, no moment of complete victory had yet come to Alicia. True, she had marched in with banners flying, but she had no security in her conquest. She suspected sometimes the possibility of revolt. And the consciousness of her own weakness struck cold to her heart, which was not in the least the heart of a conqueror.

Oddly enough, George came first to explain himself to Stella Mackaye. The fact that Stella was Cambridge born and bred perhaps had nothing to do with her sense of responsibility; but this at any rate she had, and it prevented her a good deal from minding her own business. In no strict sense could she have been held responsible for Alicia's safety and happiness, yet she held herself so, in some degree. And therefore she sent for George next day to lunch with her—Alicia being absent—and called him to account.

It was not the first time George had lunched alone with Mrs. Mackaye, but always before this he had enjoyed it. She had a clever and above all a frank way of talking which amused him; and they had been able to take together a properly aloof and entertained view of the world and of one another. For one season George had been the attendant cavalier, as Marvin now was; thus Stella could take a thoroughly maternal attitude toward him on his engagement, and now was entitled to a tone of authority. She began, however, with sardonic lightness:

"Now, George, of course I know the trouble is with the artistic temperament, and you c-can't help that, poor dear! But tell me, do you think

you're going to make my adorable Alicia unhappy? Because if you are, I've a g-good mind to put prussic acid in your coffee. I keep a supply on purpose for p-people with temperament—horrid things!”

But George was deadly serious; he was tragic. He couldn't eat.

“Put it in and welcome,” he said somberly. “I shall undoubtedly make everybody unhappy, including myself. It seems to be what I was made for.”

“Oh, nonsense! Don't get the idea that you're fatal. What's the m-matter? Can you tell me? I can't bear to see Alicia grieving. Why did she ever care for you, anyhow? I can't m-make it out.”

“Neither can I. I wish to heaven she never had!”

“Oh, George, you don't mean that—”

“But I do. I wish I'd never seen her, sweet as she is and lovely as she's been to me. It's been an awful mistake. And now I've got to tell her so.”

“Tell her—?”

“Just that. You may as well know, because you would know, anyhow. I can't help it. If I could care more for Alicia I would—but I can't help it that I've been caught by another woman. I can't marry Alicia when I don't love her.”

“Wait, wait, George! Don't, for heaven's sake, let your imagination, or whatever it is, run away with you now. You *did* love Alicia—can't you remember how you talked to me about her? And this new f-fancy—good heavens, you don't think you're serious about Miss Morrison, do you?”

“Certainly I am. I wish I were not.”

“But only think how often you've been serious before.”

“No, Stella, never like this. I've been charmed by many women, that's true, but this is different. There's every practical reason against it—absolutely every one. It gets me into no end of trouble. And I don't think she even loves me. But, Stella, I can love *her*—she's the only woman I've ever cared for that I knew I should never tire of—I know I can love her forever.”

He spoke with a passion and sincerity that for a moment silenced Mrs. Mackaye. But she quickly recovered herself.

“Well, suppose you can, then—or think you can. Do you mean you'd want to marry her?”

“I mean I do want to marry her, since that's the only practical way to acquire her permanently.”

“Well, really!”

“I mean that, from my feeling for her, we two might be the only people in the world. I could imagine living with her all my life in a solitude—on a desert island. She isn't like other women, whom you can't think of apart from a social background. She has no background—no relation to anything else—it seems absurd to consider social conventions in connection with her. She's like some wonderful creature out of a medieval poem—she's like Melisande, only that she has the wisdom of all the centuries—she doesn't belong in time or space at all. I don't know whether she's good or bad. I don't know whether I'm going to be happy or miserable with her. All I know is that she's the one woman out of the whole world for me.”

“Isn't this just romancing? You talk like a b-boy of twenty with his first love affair.”

“There's something about first loves and last loves very much alike, I suppose. You can't have love without romance—that's what makes it. But, Stella, this is real.”

And the worst of it was that she couldn't but feel it was real; that his emotion was sincere and strong, and he strangely steadied by it. But emotion was one thing, duty quite another, in her creed; which she held none the less strongly for not always living up to it herself.

“It may be real,” she said drily. “But so, my friend, is Alicia's love for you. What becomes of her?”

He made a gesture of despair. “Can't you—won't you help me?”

“Help you—how?”

“I mean, let the break come from her. She must have seen the situation.

only that she has an extraordinary faculty for blinding herself. She's perpetually in the clouds. She never sees anything just as it is. She's idealized me, for example, out of all resemblance to what I really am. You can tell her anything you like about me. . . . Don't look at me so—It isn't that I'm a coward about it. Only that it will be so much less painful—for her—"

"No, it won't, not a bit of it—now stop and think. You'll have to do it yourself if you've made up your mind to it. Of c-course, there's no use in my telling you what I think of the whole thing and of you."

"Yes there is. I want you to tell me. I don't defend myself."

"Well, I don't see how you c-can. Of course, I think you're c-crazy to begin with. It's all very fine for you to talk about poetry and fairyland and Melisandes—perhaps you feel that way, but you can't expect anyone else to. Then as to social backgrounds and relations and so on. You scorn them now, b-because Miss Morrison hasn't got any. But they're necessary to civilized life, all the same, and you're a social person. You can't g-go and live on a desert island, and you wouldn't if you could. You need someone who will help to link you to the world, instead of c-cutting you off from it. Why, George, you wouldn't want your wife on the stage—and I don't believe she'd give it up, would she?"

"I don't know. I think she would, but it doesn't matter. She'll do as she likes, of course."

"Oh, yes, of course! That's the way we begin! But if she does as she likes what are you to do? What kind of life would you live, anyhow? She doesn't get on with people—doesn't like them—they don't like her. She'll be a d-dead weight socially—"

George shrugged his shoulders. "You're talking from Alicia's point of view. You know I hate that world."

"Oh, hate it by all means! Only I don't see where else you belong. Her world, I suppose, wouldn't suit you.

Who was her husband, anyhow, and where is he? Do you know?"

"He was a newspaper man and a press agent. She married him when she was seventeen. They separated within a year. She divorced him when she was twenty-one. She'd been on the stage two years when she met him, and she says he was the best that had come in her way up to that time."

"Yes. And you are the b-best now, I suppose. . . . Well, all this about her, George, is really beside the point—which is that, in my view, you're solemnly bound to Alicia. You talk of breaking your engagement, and through me, through a third person! Why, Alicia considers herself practically married to you."

"Well, she isn't, you know," said George. He looked appealingly at Mrs. Mackaye. His nervous hand knocked off a claret glass, which broke on the floor unheeded.

"It's almost the same thing. It's known everywhere, and she has begun her trousseau—"

"Trousseau!"

"Yes—when she expects to be married in two months—of course. Do you think you can coolly toss her overboard now?"

"You won't help me, then?"

"Help you to tie her hands and give her a push? No, I won't. You'll have to manage it alone, my friend—and what's m-more, I won't have it done in my house. Why, I feel like an accomplice now—I feel almost as though we were planning to m-murder her."

"Oh, come!" cried George in strong irritation, "don't try to make it out worse than it is. Do you think, then, that I ought to marry her, and tell her nothing?"

"I think you ought to go on as though you meant to keep your engagement, and give yourself a chance. At any rate, you'll just have to do that while she's here. And very likely you'll think better of it by then—it's a whole week, you know."

George was deaf to this sarcasm. They got up from the table, as he said

slowly: "That means, as she's going back to Chicago, that I shall have to write it to her. Well, perhaps that will be the best way. And yet, I wish it could be over sooner. And it will seem as though I were trying to—shirk it."

"And so you were. I d-don't think very well of you, George Gay."

They stood in the drawing-room. Evidently Mrs. Mackaye did not mean to ask him to sit down.

"I can't help it," he said, still with his tragic look. "I suppose all my friends will take it that way. You can cut me, you know, if you like—"

"And you think you won't care? Well, just wait and see. Miss Morrison may be a Melisande, but you're no P-Pelleas—all for love and the world well lost! You'll suffer for this, I hope and believe."

VI

A WEEK later George wrote his letter, not easily, but quite firm in the faith of its necessity.

NEW YORK, January 10.

MY DEAR ALICIA:

I know your visit here was not a happy one. Things were not right between us, and I should not have let you go away without an explanation if it had not been for Mrs. Mackaye, who forbade me to talk to you about it in her house. I really can't see why, or how she had the right to interfere. She told me that I was making you unhappy, and I know that it is true. I have felt it for some time past, and it seems to me that I have no right to go on doing it. If our marriage is going to mean unhappiness for you—and I can't help feeling wretchedly that it is—then it must not be. You are far too fine and lovely a creature to be wasted so. I have always told you, you know, that you idealized me, and, I feared, cared for something in me that really wasn't there at all—and just lately it has seemed to me that you were finding this out for yourself, and that this caused your unhappiness. But it's better to find it out now than later—too late. If I married you, and you were unhappy, I should want to kill myself, I think. Will you write me frankly about it all? If you wish I'll go on to Chicago now, instead of in March. I am at your disposal.

Always devotedly yours,

GEORGE.

Eight days later he had to telegraph:

Did you receive letter? May I not have a word?

Then Alicia wrote:

DEAR GEORGE:

I have delayed replying to your letter because I don't understand it. I know you haven't written frankly to me. If I was unhappy in New York it was because I saw you were so. The explanation should have come from you. Apparently Mrs. Mackaye knew it. I can't see why she forbade you to speak of it there to me, nor why you felt bound to obey her. At any rate, you must give it to me now. Perhaps it will be better for you to come out now, if you can conveniently. Unless, of course, you prefer writing. I haven't anything to explain. My feeling for you is what it always has been. If you could be happy I should be so. But if you are, as you so often say, of an unhappy temperament and if you must have these dark moods, I shall still be happier with you than I could possibly be in any other way—that is, if I did not add to your unhappiness. Is this frank enough?

ALICIA.

This letter reached George on Saturday, and he telegraphed at once:

I leave for Chicago Monday noon.

VII

FOR these two weeks between Alicia's departure and his own, George hardly saw Miss Morrison except in public. He was faithful at the tri-weekly performances of the Independent Theater, and a handful of other people, for other reasons, were faithful. But the failure of this venture was now quite evident. There was discord in the management, and the lack of public support made an early end inevitable. The main actors had already found other work. Isabel Morrison had been engaged for a romantic play, which after a successful opening in the city was going on tour. She was to be leading woman, in place of an eccentric lady who declined to leave New York. "The play is rubbish, of course," she said resignedly to George, during one of their few talks, "but I must take what I can get."

"I hope you'll take me, before long," was his comment. "Or let me take

you—abroad somewhere—to Italy, perhaps. We'll have the spring there, and the early summer—and then go on to Switzerland. Or perhaps you'd rather go to Spain?"

"Have you a castle there?" she asked, smiling. "I'm going to Chicago for two weeks with 'The Heart of the King,' and then to do one-night stands through the South—provided we hold out that long."

She was so busy now with rehearsals and dressmakers, she said, that the portrait was given up indefinitely, and George had to be content with a few snatched moments. He knew, of course, that she did not want to see him alone, in the present state of things. That meant, he thought, that she was but waiting till he should be definitely free. But she would say nothing definite, on her side—in fact, nothing at all. He could not get from her any intimation that she cared about him in the least. He could not understand this—for caution seemed no part of her, and a rather blunt frankness was decidedly her note—except on the theory that she did not care for him. She might be willing to marry him for ease, comfort and companionship. Her life, he knew, had been full of hardships. She was tired and lonely. And he was ready to marry her on this basis, perfectly confident that, since she cared for no one else, she would love him. For he was sure that she wanted love.

Already it seemed to him that his devotion had made some difference to her. In spite of her press of work, she was more blooming, more animated. He thought, and so did other people, that she was acting better during these last days at the theater. It might be, of course, that knowing the emptiness of the work ahead of her, she was simply throwing herself into the Ibsen and Sudermann plays for her own intellectual satisfaction. Her climax of effectiveness and success came, at any rate, in the strongest and last play, "Johannesfeuer."

It was given on Saturday night. George had just got his letter from Alicia and sent his telegram, and he

meant to have a talk with Isabel next day, when she would be most at leisure. In view of his going away she could not deny him that. He went alone to the theater. The play he vaguely recollected from some performances he had seen in Germany, and it seemed to him to have some slight analogy to his own situation. But he was not prepared for its emotional effect.

The homely realism of dialogue and atmosphere lost, of course, in translation, lacked the inimitable German touch in rendition; but the poetic power of the theme—the sudden flash of tragic passion in the midst of the quietest little domestic drama—held good. George began by wondering at Isabel's technical grasp of her role. From the first moment of her entrance on the stage, in her prim gray dress and apron, she was so completely the picture of Marikke, the German country girl, the housewife, the girl with a secret, a sad history. Her quiet face, experienced, expressive, reticent; her eyes, heavy with sleeplessness and grief; her sad mouth, smiling at the simple people about her—all this suggestive personality became at once, without once obtruding itself, the center of the action. Marikke's shame for her own low origin and her love for the betrothed of Trude, grew and mingled together till, in the big scene with Georg, in the quiet family sitting room in the sleeping house, the mysterious fires of freedom flashing outside in the summer midnight, they broke out together in the wild cry of the girl, as she clasped Trude's lover in her arms: "My mother steals—and I steal also—you, Georg, you!"

The bitter, passionate joy of Marikke's abandon and its deep echo in the final scene, in her parting speech to Georg, "For me St. John's fire has burned once only—one night only!"—this sweep of primal emotion fairly overwhelmed the few auditors, left them almost too startled to applaud, to call out before the curtain the pale actress. She came with the others, and the little company made its final bow. And when the curtain went down for the last time,

George Gay was scribbling a note, which he sent around to Isabel's dressing room: "I am going to Chicago. I must see you—*must*—tonight." The answer came back: "Come down to the house and take supper with me." And George caught his breath with surprise and delight.

He had nearly an hour to wait at the hotel before Isabel finally appeared. He was watching in the lobby for her, and ran out on the snow-drifted sidewalk to take her out of the cab.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting," she said as they went in, "but there were people to see me, and one thing and another—"

"Oh, it's awfully good of you to let me come at all—this is more than I dared hope. I thought you might be going out somewhere to supper—perhaps Mrs. Mackaye's—"

"Oh, suppers! She asked me, but I don't like that sort of thing. I'm hungry, though. We'll have a steak, shall we? This is really my dinner, you know."

They went into the small dining room, which was empty except for the night clerk who was refreshing himself at a corner table; and Isabel dropped her loose wraps—a black cloak and a white scarf that covered her hair—and beckoned George to sit down. They took a small table, above which an unshaded gas jet burned bleakly; and a solitary waiter appearing, Isabel gave her order of steak and salad. Then she leaned back in her chair and stretched her arms out wearily, and smiled at him in friendly fashion. "Oh, how tired I am!" she murmured.

Between the black of her dress and the deep color of her hair her face looked pallid, and there were heavy shadows under her eyes; but it was the fatigue of a strong and healthy body, needing only sleep to restore its full vitality. Her look even now suggested energy in its languor. Her nerves were not wholly relaxed. The excitement of the evening was still in her veins. George felt from the first moment that she was treating him with a subtle difference. She was just now not on her guard with

him. She was glad of his presence as she had never been before. The emotional storm that she had put herself through on the stage had its effect.

And if it affected her, it no less affected George. Her complex attraction for him was partly due to her artistic intelligence; and of this she had just given a high proof. She moved him at once intellectually, emotionally, sensuously. An intoxication of pleasure burned in him, and an intense desire to be loved as Marikke of the glowing eyes and hair had loved Georg. At first he was very quiet, and ate nervously, his eyes alone showing his feeling.

"So you're going to Chicago," said Isabel, in her matter-of-fact way.

"Yes; Miss Talbot wants to see me. I shall stay on, to be there when you come."

"Of course she does," said Isabel. "You're quite right to go." And she looked at him, smiling enigmatically.

"And then, when I see you there, you won't put me off any longer, will you?"

"Who knows?" murmured Isabel, with doubt in her smiling look. "How did you like the play tonight?" she asked abruptly.

"Don't ask me. You know. I didn't think you could do a thing like that—so simple and primitive—Isabel!" He leaned across the table and seized her hand. "I wish you'd marry me now, before I go—tomorrow."

She flushed suddenly and shot at him a glance of anger. "To make sure of you—or to make you sure of yourself? No. Go back to Miss Talbot."

"It's only to make it clearer to her that I go—you know that, don't you? I can tell her better than I can write—"

"Can you? Poor boy—poor, dear boy!"

"Why do you treat me like a child? . . . And yet I rather like it, too. I am a child with you, I suppose. You're so much calmer, more balanced than I. Oh, Isabel, I want you to love me—as you can love—"

He bent his handsome head and kissed her hand, and laid it against his forehead, closing his eyes. The clerk had gone out now. Isabel asked for a

cigarette and leaned back in her chair to light it.

"How many women do you want to love you?" she asked, keeping up a pretence of lightness.

"I want only you!" George cried. "And you know it. I never—if I could tell everything, you'd see how it has been with Alicia. I don't see why I shouldn't tell you—you're nearer to me than she is—"

"You needn't tell me. I can see plainly enough that she is in love with you. I understand—better than you do, perhaps."

"You think I'm a fool, don't you? I'm not now, though, whatever I may have been. See here, will you marry me in Chicago? Or better still, give up this engagement now; don't go on there at all. I'll come back here on Thursday—"

"Ah, we shall see! I sha'n't give up the engagement, George. I've signed a contract, you know, and one must keep to one's word."

"Oh, nonsense! Pay the forfeit, or whatever it is—I suppose money will settle it easily. You'll have to break it somehow."

"Must I? Well, do you break yours first—no, no, I don't mean that!" For a moment she hid her face in her hands.

Then she looked up at him, pale and grave. "George, I don't love you. If I were never to see you again after tomorrow, I don't think it would make a great difference in my life. What *would* make a difference—a fearful one—is what goes along with you, money and rest and freedom, and—all that. You can tempt me with that—if you want to. But I can't see that it would be a good bargain for you—I advise you to—keep to what you have."

George laughed shortly. "Never mind about that. I'm content with your bargain. I know you do care a little for me, or you could. Come now, couldn't you? I'm not so bad, after all—"

Their eyes met in a long look. Isabel rose and caught up her wraps.

"It's late," she said. "I'm very

tired. Good night, and good-bye. *Bon voyage.*"

"And must I—but you're right, of course. I oughtn't to keep you up. But I'm not going till Monday, you know—"

Isabel shook her head. "Not to-morrow," she said gravely. "Good-bye."

He put on his coat, and they moved together to the door.

"When I see you next, then—no more rules and regulations!" He caught her in his arms. "And kiss me good-bye."

She looked up to see his eyes full of tears. The kiss was given, and a flame mounted to his brain.

"Isabel, Isabel, don't send me away!—take me—let me stay with you!"

For a moment she leaned against him and he held her close. Then with a strong effort she drew away. Neither spoke another word. They went out into the lobby, where the night clerk lounged at his desk. Isabel began to mount the stairs, trailing her cloak after her. George stood watching her till at the landing she turned for a moment before disappearing from his sight. Her last look at him was deep, strange, intoxicating and sad, too. It was a confession of emotion. And its sadness—what could that mean, if it were not doubt of him? This was the memory of her that, with hard beating pulses, he carried away.

VIII

His two visits next day and his great basket of violets and orchids brought not a glimpse nor a word of her. He went out of the city in a blinding snow-storm, which somewhere in the mid-waste of country developed into a blizzard; and there, on the dreary, drifted prairie, in the midst of howling winds and whirls of white dust, the train was stalled, and crept finally into Chicago nine hours late. George had then a further journey out to the paternal home on Prairie Avenue, and arrived half starved and more than half frozen, to find a tumultuous family welcome

and a note from Alicia, asking him to dinner that evening at eight.

In fact, he was enveloped in Alicia from the moment when his mother and two sisters precipitated themselves into his snowy embrace in the hall. Alicia had written—her note was instantly produced. Alicia had telephoned two hours since, telling them that his train was late—which they had already found out for themselves—and saying that she hoped he would come over, anyhow, if it were not *too* late and he too tired. The family had thought that he might have gone directly to Alicia's house, and it was very sweet of him to come home first.

"Sweet? Well, I could hardly present myself there as I am!" he said, when all the greetings, including a quiet handshake from his father, were over. "I don't suppose I can go over at this hour, but I'll telephone."

Accordingly he did so, almost before he had got his coat off, while the two girls hung rapturously in the background. They were very young, and their romantic interest in his engagement had all along been rather too keen for George's comfort.

The butler's voice answered him, indistinct because of some trouble with the wires, caused by the storm. Alicia was at dinner, but came at once to the telephone. He could hardly make out her words, but it was plain that she wanted him to come. He hung up the receiver and took it down again to call up the nearest stable and order a cab.

"You're going over, then?" breathlessly inquired Mary, the youngest girl.

"Yes. Now I want a bite to eat, and father's evening clothes. Heaven knows where my trunk is."

"Oh, you poor boy, you must be tired to death now!" sighed his mother. "But I suppose you can't wait till to-morrow." And she smiled tenderly at the lover's impetuosity.

All his family, George knew—at least the feminine part of it—adored Alicia. His father, the only inexpressive one, liked her. She had been very attentive and sweet, always, to his mother. And Mary and Alice worshipped from a dis-

tance her beauty, her distinction and general grandeur. These two, chattering outside the door of the room where he was dressing, told him about Alicia's visit to them the day before—how happy she had seemed that he was coming, how beautiful she had looked all in black velvet and ermine, how nice she had been to them.

George's father, smoking placidly in an armchair by the open fire, directed him where to find the various needed articles of attire. His mother brought up a tray which she had made ready herself, for she had a jealous desire to render him all the personal service possible. The girls were forbidden even to mend his gloves or sew on a button when he was at home.

With all his fatigue, hurry and perturbation of mind, George found this home atmosphere sweet. The old-fashioned simplicity of his people, the parochial monotony of their lives, even the house itself, full of cumbrous, ugly furniture and incredibly bad bric-à-brac—all the things that had bored and bothered him when he was living at home, now seemed unaccountably pleasant. He began to wish that he could stay on for a quiet visit there; at the same time he knew that he could not rest until he had got over the dreaded interview with Alicia, and was free to go back to Isabel.

In the cab, lying back in a corner with his eyes closed, he felt how utterly tired he was. The last weeks had been one long emotional strain. His work, the single steadying influence of his life, had been interrupted, and he had been tossed about by contrary feelings until he was weary of himself. He was physically done up, too, not having slept on the train, and not much the two nights before leaving New York. He dozed off and on during the cab's slow progress through the snow-filled streets, but woke when it came out on the lake front, where the ice blocks were piled in a sort of barricade and the wind poured over it, sweeping clear over dead, frozen spaces.

The big Talbot house was lighted from top to bottom, and as soon as he got into the hall George heard the mur-

mur of voices in the drawing-room. He had expected to find Alicia alone, for it was nearly eleven; instead, there were eight people who had been dining, and all of whom he knew. Mrs. Talbot, a stately woman with thick, elaborately-dressed white hair, met him at the threshold and kissed him. Then Alicia came swiftly toward him and gave him her hand, smiling, flushing, radiant.

At that moment he saw the whole thing, as Alicia had arranged it. In his own home he had been met by it, and here—the little assemblage of people well known to him, pleasant, easy, conventional people, Alicia's own "crowd"—the affectionate welcome of Alicia's mother, and her own look of happiness in his coming—all this, he felt, was prepared, calculated. It was to show her hold on him. He felt a sudden warm pang of admiration for her. She was magnificent—no less; and in looks tonight she was absolutely at her best. She wore black velvet, a wonderful long, sweeping, clinging dress; and a coronet-like band of silver, set with dull-colored stones, clasped her dark head with regal effect.

IX

"You'll stay here tonight, George, won't you?" Mrs. Talbot said, after the last lingering guest had betaken himself out into the cold night. "You can telephone home, you know, and have things sent over in the morning—and I always think it such a pity to have the poor cab horses out in such weather when it isn't necessary. Not to mention that you must be tired out—"

"Thank you very much, but I absolutely must go back tonight," George interrupted.

He gave no reason, but his tone was so unmistakably firm that Mrs. Talbot did not urge him. She was slightly displeased, as always, when any suggestion of her own was not promptly acted on.

"Very well, if you must I suppose you must," she remarked. "And now

I dare say you and Alicia can spare me. You mustn't keep him long, though, Alicia—it's late. We're very glad to have you here again, my dear, and I hope you're going to stay some time. You're looking ill—have you been working too hard?"

"No, no; I'm tired, that's all."

George walked to the foot of the stairs with her, and she bestowed another affectionate salute upon him. She had always been fond of him, from his boyhood up; partly, as she used to tell him, because he was so good looking.

"People have no business being ugly," she would often say, with the serene consciousness that no one of her family could be accused of that incompetence.

George went slowly back into the large, dusky, quiet room, where Alicia stood before the wood fire. The place was a good setting for her. Everything in it was big and luxurious and costly. There was, perhaps, rather too much foreign spoil—too many things carved and embroidered and gilded and embossed. But firelight and candlelight left these matters of detail in soft obscurity and gave only a general effect of rich accumulation.

Alicia pointed out a deep armchair to George, and sat down herself near, taking up a little painted fire screen to shield her face. But George, in spite of his fatigue, preferred to stand.

"Perhaps I ought to send you away, if you must go tonight," she said softly. "You've had a hard journey."

"Yes, but I can't go just yet—not till I've had a word, at least, with you. . . . You're looking very well, very beautiful, indeed." He stood looking down at her with a kind of fascinated pleasure in his eyes. Alicia knew her own moment, and the pride and power of it. She put up her hand sovereignly and took his; and obeying her soft motion he sank on the little sofa beside her. She leaned toward him, and in another moment, without remotely intending it, he had kissed her.

"Alicia!" he cried, springing up.

He could not go on; the words would not come. "Alicia!" he groaned, and turned, in a very anguish of dumbness, to walk the length of the room away from her.

She would not, perhaps could not, help him out. She sat motionless, staring at the fire, her face in shadow, and the hand that held the screen trembling. He had to come back, to make the supreme effort, it seemed to him, of his life.

"You know—I wrote you—" he began huskily. "I'm here to—to clear everything up. I've made you suffer—if I have—forgive me, will you, Alicia?"

And a sentence from a play flashed through his mind: "Forgive, O Lord, all my past sins, and this one, just this one little sin, that I am going to commit tonight."

She moved abruptly and dropped the screen. "I haven't anything to forgive," she murmured.

"Yes you have, Alicia—my—my stupidity, my weakness, my failure. I'm not the person for you. I'm not big enough, not good enough—" Again he broke off and looked at her pleadingly.

"Of course you know I don't think that."

She sat in the full glow of the fire now, and held her head proudly erect. There was no sign of tremor about her; her long, slender hands, tightly clasped, lay under a fold of her somber dress.

"But, Alicia, I know it. I don't deserve you—I can't—can't make you happy—oh, can't you see? Won't you—"

"I can't—see—what you mean."

"You make me say it. Forgive me—Alicia. I love someone else."

He was standing at a distance from her, not looking, not daring to look, at her. Into the silence fell the oddest sound—a little laugh.

"Oh, George! you know—it happens so often!"

"So often?" he ejaculated in amazement. It was she now who would not look at him, but he could see that she was smiling faintly.

"Yes. How often, how often, have you been in love!"

"But—but this is very different. It is serious, Alicia."

"Yes, but—each time it has been serious, hasn't it? Or seemed so, at least. Why, I can remember—"

"I can't help what you remember. I can only assure you that—that I am terribly in earnest. I should think you could see that. Do you think this is any easy thing for me to do?"

"In earnest?" she repeated softly. "Have you never been in earnest, then, before? Weren't you in earnest—with me?"

"Oh, I was, I was, Alicia—but—"

"You perhaps never meant to marry me?"

"Alicia, you know that nothing else was in my mind, till—just lately, a fortnight or so ago. If anyone had told me a month ago that I should be in this position now I should have been horrified—I *am*—I hate myself—but I can't help it." He threw himself into the nearest chair and bowed his head on his arm.

"No, I know—I understand—you can't help such moods." Her voice, steadied by a strong effort, was appealingly gentle. "But I think—you don't always quite know—what they really mean. You don't always quite know what you really do want. I think you ought to be—very sure—"

He made a despairing gesture.

"Good heavens! do you think if I hadn't been sure I should be here—like this?"

There was another silence.

"Then you mean—you don't care for me any longer?" she went on, still in that touchingly gentle voice.

"Oh, Alicia, I do care for you! I love your sweetness, your goodness; I—adore you for your goodness to me. But—but this other is—"

"This other? Who is this other, George?"

"You know—Miss Morrison."

"And you care more—for her?"

"In a different way. She has a tremendous power—I can't resist. I know it's all wrong—everything is—"

she doesn't even care for me, I think—"

"Does she know?" breathed Alicia.

"Yes—she knows."

A deep, painful color flooded Alicia's face and neck. She rose now and walked rather waveringly across the room and stopped with her back to George, moving some little bronze figures about on a table. The long train of her dress lying across a dark crimson rug made her look taller, more imposing, than she was. Her slender waist, her white shoulders above the dark velvet, her bent head with its beautiful lines and poise—all her beauty, so fine and delicate, seemed suddenly to make its great appeal for her. Its exquisite fragility, trembling, quivering under a blow, seemed in silence to cry out pain and reproach. And the man cowering behind her felt an equal pain in his own faithlessness, in having hurt her thus.

"Forgive me," he whispered.

One of the little bronzes fell from her fingers, and struck out against a companion piece a dull, metallic sound. Alicia drew herself up, turned and walked toward him. For very shame of his physical loss of control, he got to his feet as she approached, and tried to present a calm front. He could not bear to look pitiable, even while he wanted desperately to appeal for pity.

"Tell me," said Alicia.

She took his hand, drew him with her to the little sofa by the fire. "Tell me about her. You haven't known her long?"

"No. A few months—about three, I think."

"And you've only been—in love with her a few weeks?"

"Yes."

"And you told her so—when?"

"About two weeks ago."

"What did she say?"

"Nothing. She said I'd better go back—"

"It wasn't keeping faith with me, was it?"

"No."

George answered her questions quietly, in an exhausted tone, and looked at

her the while in dull surprise. Her gentle air might have befitted a wife catechizing an erring husband, or perhaps a mother with her son. She had never taken this attitude to him before. Tacitly George admitted her right to catechize him as much as she chose—he could not help but admit her hold over him. He trembled to perceive that she did not mean to give up that hold. To this the whole course of things that evening had been tending, yet he could hardly believe it, even now.

Alicia's gray eyes, very still and bright, held his own, and her long fingers were nervously clasped about his.

"Do you think, George, that she would make you happy? Are you sure of it?"

Nothing but the truth could meet the spirit that looked out of Alicia's eyes.

"No—I'm not sure of it. I have no idea."

"Do you think she would love you?"

"I don't know."

"But she would—marry you?"

"I think so—for some reasons."

"Then it is—what you think your love for her, against my love for you."

"Alicia! You mustn't love me!"

"But I do, I do! You asked me to love you, and long before that I had begun to. My whole life has grown 'round you. I cannot stop loving you any more than I can stop breathing. Do you see—do you see what you are doing? Why, it's impossible. You let a feeling of a few weeks, that may be gone tomorrow, come between us and crush me. For a woman you scarcely know, who doesn't love you, you do this to me. I won't let you—I won't let you be so weak, so cowardly—I won't let you spoil your life. If she doesn't love you, you can't be happy; and she can't love you as I do. No one can, no one. Don't you count that for anything? Am I nothing at all? Am I to be thrown aside for a whim, a fancy? I won't be; you dare not. You are mine, as much as if we were married; mine because I love you so completely, and we promised each other. You don't know what I shall be to you. You don't understand—you're blind

just now. I won't let you hurt yourself and me. I won't let you go."

She stopped, gasping for breath, her eyes dilated, almost black, her whole appearance transfigured.

"You admit that I have a claim on you—your own act gave me one," she added in a whisper.

"Yes," he was forced to say.

"Then I assert it. You are bound to me."

Suddenly she quivered, drooped. Her two hands went out; her head dropped forward. George caught her and laid her back against the cushions of the sofa. Her eyes closed; she breathed faintly and flutteringly. She looked broken, spent, her supreme effort made.

George gazed at her with a dull conviction that he was doomed. She had conquered him. He could not strike her down and go on over her dead body—and something like this, persistence would mean. A better or a worse man than he might have managed it, but he could not. His feeling now was a kind of fatalistic submission. If she would have it so, so be it. Let her have her will. Let his be the sacrifice. Clearly as he knew his own desire, he was not passionate enough about it to think it worth all sacrifice. He did not care enough for his life to sacrifice any other to it. And Alicia's revelation of herself, her passionate conviction that her love and life were bound up together, overwhelmed him.

In yielding, in giving Alicia her full due, her way, he would reserve to himself, certainly, the right to be unhappy. Let unhappiness then be his portion, if Alicia would have it so. He was not strong enough, not brutal enough, to stand up against her. He must be faithless, of the two, to Isabel—and here a dull pang zigzagged through his confused mind. And that was the fault of his own idiocy, of his complete failure to realize and gauge the forces about him. The thought came to him that he might go and throw himself into the lake.

"So be it," he said mechanically. "I am bound to you."

Alicia gave no sign of hearing him. Her deadly pallor, her faint, broken breathing, hurt his bruised sensibility. He drew away from her, then went back, took up her hand and touched it with his lips.

"You understand," he said solemnly. "It is all as it was, then. That is—"

She made him a sign of dismissal, turning her head away from him.

He went out of the room and the house; first touching a bell in the hall, for he thought Alicia had seemed on the point of fainting.

He did not stop to telephone for a cab, and there was none abroad in the solitude of the street. He walked along, facing the bitter wind, hugging his physical misery, conscious that he was beaten and his mind a blank. Except that once, looking over the dead surface of the lake walled with crushed ice blocks and splinters, feeling its utter mournful silence, its gray, livid pallor, he thought of the Hell of Ice and the spirits prisoned there.

X

LATE September, warm sun and cool shadow lay over the old Tuscan city. A window opening to the southeast gave a wonderful prospect: in the foreground, just below, a broad terrace and stairway of stone and a little garden, divided by arbors from a vineyard in full fruitage; beyond, green fields in a wide semicircle inclosed as by two wings or arms the solid, hilly sweep of ancient red brick houses, ending at the city walls. Beyond the walls the fields began again, and rolled softly away, checked here and there by black marching lines of cypresses, to the low, blue hills on the skyline.

On the terrace a table was being set out for luncheon; and at the window above leaned Alicia Gay, in white walking dress and hat, just as she had come in from her morning in the Duomo. She was meditating, as she surveyed the green stretches once covered with houses inside the walls, on the city's great tragedy of centuries ago; and on

that strange memorial of Siena's ambitious prime, the great, lonely arch of marble, the beginning of an enormous cathedral which stopped just there, with its civic downfall. And she was watching for George, who was painting an old brick church out by one of the gates. He was a little late today; Alicia looked at her watch again, and finding herself quite ready for luncheon, went down to the terrace. Ten minutes more passed—fifteen—twenty. Alicia paced the terrace from end to end, ceased to look at the view, ceased to think of the Duomo or of antique tragedies; and the upright line between her eyebrows, the first marked print of time on her charming face, deepened as always when she was uneasy, giving her, for all her new bloom, a careworn look. This line had a way of appearing also when she was studying something with Baecker's help in museum or church, or when she wrote down her impressions in her notebook, so as to be able later to make conversation for George. But it was when she was waiting for George that it came oftenest. And now, by the time he appeared, half an hour late, Alicia looked very dark, indeed; and all her little observations about Pinturicchio and the *graffito* work in the Duomo had quite fled out of her mind, perhaps never to be recaptured.

George was warm from fast walking, and quite radiant.

"Awfully sorry to keep you waiting," he said in a light tone which, as he caught sight of Alicia's face, became apologetic. "But I met some awfully nice people—really somebody to talk to, you know—and I didn't notice the time. I'm hungry, though, now I think of it. Why didn't you begin without me? You know I hate to have you wait."

"You know I don't like to do that," said Alicia rather coldly.

They sat down at the table, and the servant brought an omelet which had suffered a little by the delay.

"These people," George went on, "turned up out there by San Domenico while I was working—an Englishman and his wife. They live here. He's

an art critic. I remember hearing about him—his name is Hedge." He fished a card out of his pocket and tossed it over to Alicia. "His wife seems a jolly, pleasant girl. We all had a walk together, and she's coming round to see you."

"Is she? I'm not sure I want to see her."

"Oh, yes you do. You'll like her. She's awfully simple and intelligent. And besides, you want somebody, you know. We've been here three weeks and I haven't spoken to a man!"

Alicia neglected her broiled chicken and salad. "That was the reason I didn't see you, then. I drove out to San Domenico, intending to bring you back to lunch."

"Yes, I'd gone off with them. I went up to their place—they have a floor of an old *palazzo*—and had a drink. You'll like to see their rooms—they have a lot of good old things, though I judge they're poor. I'm going off with Hedge this afternoon to prowl through the old Ghetto."

"George!"

"Well, what is it, Alicia? What have I done?"

"Have you forgotten that we were going to walk this afternoon? You were to take me out to the Osservanza."

"Oh, so I was. Well, I can put Hedge off till tomorrow. Don't cut up about it, Alicia."

"I'm not 'cutting up,' whatever you mean by that. Only I think that, as you leave me alone all the mornings, and as you want to be wandering about the town at night, you ought to consult me about engagements for the afternoon, or at least remember the ones you make with me."

George assumed a resigned air and proceeded with his luncheon. It ended with some wonderful sweets, fruit and coffee; he was in the mood to enjoy, and to feel irritated with Alicia because she wasn't, and wouldn't let him.

This was the genesis of most of their quarrels, which were pretty frequent. Some carelessness or neglect, real or fancied, on his part, would hurt Alicia; her resentment—strong out of all proportion,

it often seemed to him, with the offense—would be launched upon his head, and his only remedy was to bow at her feet. If his apology were complete enough, and, above all, if he could be moved to emotion, she was easily pacified. But if he took a high tone, or a cool tone, or a bored tone, he might be days in disgrace. Alicia would treat him with icy coldness; and at night she would weep and walk her room, and would look like a ghost next day. He could not hold out long against this; sooner or later he had always to give in.

XI

Now, as he looked at Alicia's somber brows, and observed that she had eaten no luncheon, he saw what had happened and knew what he must do—the sooner the better. He got up, having lit a cigarette, and went around to Alicia's side of the table. The terrace was in view of many windows, but George was willing to be seen making love to his wife.

"Forgive me, will you, dear?" he bent over her to say. "It was stupid of me not to think. Of course, I could have got back in time for our walk, but I'd rather have the whole afternoon with you. I'll send a note around to him. And I won't make any other engagements for the afternoon without you. Will you forgive me, now?"

He tilted the wide brim of her hat and kissed her. Alicia put up both hands to set the hat straight, and bit her lip, but the tears would come.

"No, you'd better go with him—you'll enjoy it better. You seemed so delighted to have found somebody! I didn't realize—how much I'd been boring you."

"Oh, dearest, don't talk nonsense! Just because I want to see a man now and then—"

"It isn't that, and you know it, George. I never want to interfere with your pleasure—it's cruel to say I do—"

"Well, well, I didn't say it. Now *don't* cry; don't spoil the afternoon.

We'll have a jolly time, just you and I—unless you want to ask the Hedges. Well, all right. We'll go out to the Osservanza, and have tea somewhere. Now do eat something—take some of that cream; it's bully. And then you must lie down and rest, and get your color back. Did you have a tiresome morning?"

"Rather," said Alicia plaintively, but drying her eyes. "I don't enjoy seeing things so much by myself. But of course it's different for you. And I don't want to be a bother to you."

"Oh, my dear, you're a great pleasure to me. You know I'd rather go about with you than anyone. . . . Come now, that's settled."

He drew a chair near her, and sat smoking while she ate her cream, his right hand holding her left. When she had finished and they had left the table, George drew her hand through his arm, and they walked up and down the terrace together. Alicia clung to him, her gray eyes pathetically bright. She seemed even more glad than he to have steered off the threatened disagreement; but she was not content with that. She wanted also to be made to feel that she had not bullied him into consideration for her; she wanted to feel that he really preferred to spend his afternoon with her. She wanted, indeed, to be made love to. Therefore, when they presently went into the house, she protested that she did not want her usual siesta. She kept him with her in her own room, an immense chamber walled with plaster and floored with stone, almost as cool as a church on this warm day. She tried to make herself as charming as possible; but, at first smiling and caressing, she ended in a hysterical burst of tears. George tried to soothe her, mystified and rather irritated though he was by the apparent unreason of her emotion. He failed to see that it was the cumulative effect of many small incidents like that of today. All such little sins of omission and carelessness, exaggerated by Alicia's sensitiveness, dwelt in her mind, and grew day

by day into more definite and stronger proof of his lack of love for her.

Not understanding this, he was a good deal bored by her bringing any fault of his back to that point: "It only shows, of course, that you don't love me. You don't—you never have."

"Oh, my dear, do be calm," he would entreat, and then followed protestations and caresses which sometimes, as today, almost seemed to satisfy Alicia's longing.

It was nearly five o'clock, eventually, when they came out of the cavernous stone entrance hall of the old house into the street—too late for the walk to the Osservanza. Instead, George proposed tea and a short ramble outside the walls. It was a popular festival of some sort, and the narrow ways of the town were crowded with holiday makers; but their little *caffè* seemed to have no more than its ordinary half-dozen frequenters, slowly consuming vermouth or ices with their scandalous evening newspaper. After bad tea and delicious but deadly cakes, the Gays went on, taking their way through the picturesque alleys of the Ghetto, out past San Domenico—a warm glow of old red color on its hill—and through the Porta Fontebranda.

Alicia was fond of walking, and did not mind being stared at by the gentlemanly populace. She was simply and charmingly dressed, still in white, which she wore as much as possible. She had gained in beauty since her marriage; she looked more blooming and more significant. The habit of asserting herself was growing on her from her association with George. By constantly reasserting the claim of her affection, she had been able, so far, to keep him constantly expressive. If he at any time showed a lack of interest in her, she made, as today, a scene. And this not from deep-laid policy on her part, but as the inevitable expression of an intense love and a passionate jealousy.

These eight months of their marriage had been a troubled time. Even at the times when Alicia was nearest happi-

ness—when they were alone somewhere, in some place like this of Siena, where they had no acquaintance—she could never be at peace. If George did not show discontent and boredom—and he sometimes did—she imagined that he felt them. In proportion as she longed to believe that he was happy in her sole society, she was convinced to the contrary. Nothing could have enabled her to believe it except an ecstatic expression on George's part. And George was never ecstatic. He was at the most only good-humored and pleased with the moment.

This was his mood now, and in his pleasure Alicia was no more than one element, and not the main one. The day was perfect, the colors of the ground and sky almost lovelier than the crumbling handiwork of past centuries—the outlines of the old red-brown city framed between liquid blue and the mixed greens of olive, vine and cypress. The road was blocked now and then by peasant wagons, drawn by ponderous oxen with enormously spreading horns. It passed now between high walls, overhung with vines heavy with grapes; sometimes below a hillside covered with olive trees. Here was the gate of a villa; there a branching lane led into a vineyard. All along, the lovely aspect of the plain, its glowing colors barred by black cypress groves, drew them on; while they turned constantly to see the sky behind them lit with a gorgeous sunset, and against it the huge cliff-like masses of buildings looking black and dead, up to the tower of the Palazzo Publico, which rose into the light, a shaft of glowing red.

It was moonlight when they came back, and the house masses with their windows lit seemed more alive than by day. As they stood on the hill, near the old brick church George was painting, a burst of song rose from a street below—a melody borne by three or four men's voices, singing, perhaps, at the door of a wine shop after a day's pleasure; one voice a magnificent bass on which the others seemed to rest and to be buoyed up as by the waves of the

sea. Poured out in superb flowing ease and freedom, the voice seemed to sum up and typify the wonderful richness of the land, lavishing carelessly in nook and bypath its divine gifts, its wealth of the senses and the soul.

Thrilled by the esthetic quality of the moment, George stood motionless, drinking it in with keen pleasure. And Alicia felt it too, though conscious that her pleasure and her thrill came through his presence.

XII

THEY had talked of living abroad indefinitely. There had seemed to be no reason why they should not go on drifting about from one beautiful place to another, according to the season or the mood, making themselves comfortable and amusing themselves. There seemed to be no reason why they should live in America. Neither George nor Alicia, after an experience of softer and more civilized climes, had any idea of returning to their native city. George had no civic interests, and Chicago offered nothing else to him. If they went back, it was agreed, New York was the only possible place. But neither of them had any definite place in New York; both had lived there enough to know that it would take a good deal of effort to make a satisfactory position for themselves. On coming abroad in February, immediately after their marriage, neither had been in the mood to make this effort. George wanted only to get away from everything, and Alicia had been only too happy to get him away. They had discussed the respective merits of Rome, Paris and London, as permanent headquarters.

But now, after eight months' trial, the situation was changed; rather they had found out that it simply wouldn't work. Each had come privately to this conclusion; and one day, toward the end of their stay in Siena, George brought it up. They had spent the afternoon up to the closing hour in the *Belli Arti*, among the exquisite primitive pictures,

the Duccios and Lorenzettis that George delighted in; and it was therefore with a full feeling of the charm in this life of wandering and star-gazing that he spoke. Alicia's presence beside him during the afternoon, her attitude toward his interests, gave the needed impulse to expression. Alicia was a perpetual, obedient echo; perpetually listening, obediently repeating each of his ideas, his opinions, his very words. She seemed actually to have no interests apart from him; she depended upon him for everything—emotions, thoughts, pleasures, all. And he was beginning to feel the dead weight of it. He now realized very completely that Alicia had no intellectual interests, and, with the best will in the world, couldn't have them. He realized also that she was not the sort of woman to build up a successful social life in a strange land out of the elements that they found abroad. And, finally, he saw that she was more and more dissatisfied and unhappy.

They had taken tea with the Hedges, and were walking back together through the town.

"You were bored, I suppose, this afternoon," George began in a cool tone. "You certainly looked so."

"Did I? I suppose I was," Alicia returned as coldly. "It seems to me we've been spending our days with the Hedges."

"Well, we won't have many more to spend with them, at any rate. But they're as pleasant people as we're apt to see anywhere. I can't see why you don't get on with them."

"They don't interest me, that's all. Mr. Hedge talks shop perpetually, and he has that irritating English way of condescending to a woman. And as you are always flirting with his wife I am deprived of the pleasure of her society."

"Well, you might have seen her often, if you'd wanted to. She wanted to be friendly with you. As to my flirting with her—well, call it that if you like. Of course, you know there's nothing of the sort."

"I don't know what *you* call it—

but I do know you're always looking at her and laughing with her. You've taken her out several times and you see her every day. Of course, I don't care if you do, only—I don't like to be pushed aside, as I was this afternoon—left to talk the entire time to that man, who, as you know, bores me to extinction."

Alicia almost sobbed with anger. George shrugged his shoulders and was silent for some moments. Then he said: "I don't think we're apt to get much out of living about like this—except trouble. You don't like the people we meet, the unconventional people I like, or the life. You don't care for art really, or for study. You won't amuse yourself, or adapt yourself. You're bored, and you show it, and make me uncomfortable. I can't see why you want to stay over here."

There was another pause before Alicia could command her voice. "I'm not sure that I do," she said finally. "But I thought you did."

"I don't care much where I am," George retorted sulkily. "Only I want to have a reasonably quiet life. And I think if you had some occupation you'd be much happier."

"I suppose you mean," Alicia said in a dry voice, "that I'm too much with you. But if that's all—"

"It isn't all. It isn't the point. The point is that we haven't any definite interest in common, and yet you seem to have no definite interest apart from me. If you had something to do that you cared about you'd be happier, and we should quarrel less."

Alicia did not reply to this at all. They walked on for some time in silence, across the Piazza del Campo, full of sunset light. Neither felt like going indoors; they passed the turning that led to their street and went on to one of the gates, and beyond it for a short distance. George, in spite of his mental disturbance, could not help seeing the beauty of tone and line all about, and being diverted by it; till presently he saw also that Alicia was unobtrusively weeping, one tear after another rolling down her cheeks and

being quietly wiped away. He turned back, then, without any other notice.

XIII

Just inside the gate, in a twilight shadow, they met a funeral procession—the corpse carried on a draped litter by black-robed, black-masked men, surrounded by others of the brotherhood bearing torches. The *forestieri* stood aside, for the procession, moving in a disorderly swarm and at a quick walk, almost a trot, choked the narrow way. Each black figure as it passed showed them the gleam of curious eyes through the holes of its mask.

"Bully!" said George enthusiastically. "How well they do everything here! What a perfectly unspoiled, almost untouched place it is! I could stay here a year painting, I think—a series of street scenes, the life of the people. That is—no, I couldn't, either."

They were walking on again more rapidly, George setting the pace in the hope that Alicia's nerves might quiet themselves without a scene.

"I mean," he added quickly, "that of course the place is dead, for us. That's the beauty of it, too—but one couldn't stand it long. I quite understand your being bored by it. Perhaps it wasn't worth while to stay so long—just for a picture or two, which may never see the light, after all. At any rate, we'll move on now—to Venice first and then Rome, if you wish—unless you'd rather go home."

"Home?" she murmured.

"Yes. Say, to spend the winter in New York. I've been thinking a lot about it lately—from your side, as far as I can. It seems to me that if we should have a house in New York—I think we might arrange to buy one—you might find the place very interesting in a way that Europe never can be. I know some good people there—you know some. It might amuse you to go into society. You wouldn't get in all at once, you know—that's just the point. It's the game. It will

take all your social cleverness, and all the pull that either of us has, and time and work, to really count—but I think it would be worth while trying. As an occupation, I mean. With your beauty, and the amount of money we can raise between us, we ought to be able to do something."

"But you," said Alicia more calmly. "You wouldn't care for that sort of thing—you'd rather paint over here. And I wanted—I want to do what would be best for you."

"I'm not at all sure I would," said George hastily. "I may get tired of painting any minute. And, at any rate, you know, you can't consider my interest apart from your own. You can't expect me to be happy, or to work, when you're constantly, obviously miserable. I'm convinced it's no use our staying over here this winter. We'd better go back next month. That will give you time to look about. We might rent a house this winter, and buy it later if we like it. I think you'll be better off when we're settled and you have more of your own kind of people."

They entered their own house now, crossed the court, mounted the stairs and were admitted by the smiling mustachioed manservant. Alicia went into her room, followed by George.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked reasonably.

"I think perhaps you are right," said Alicia, as with shaking fingers she unfastened her hat and threw it on the bed. She was standing before the mirror, but at sight of her own image turned sharply away. Her face at that moment looked old and plain. To hide it she dropped on the stiff sofa, and put up her arm in its loose white sleeve across her reddened eyes.

"If we go home—" she had to stop, and begin again. "If we go home I can find some occupation, as you say; I wouldn't be on your hands so much. I've been thinking of it lately, too. I suppose we'd better decide to go."

"Very well—I really think it's wise. Then we can come over again, you know, for the summer, whenever you

like. You can get all of Europe you want in half the year—you're a good American, after all!" He smiled, ending in quite a cheerful tone, and let himself relax into an armchair. "I think we've hit on the right thing now. There are any amount of things in New York, really, to interest you."

"Yes," said Alicia hollowly. "I might go in for charity—or for politics—or society. Then, if you say so, let us go back. Only—I don't care one bit on my own account. If you would be happier here, alone—" she made a long pause, and George looked alarmed—"why, let us stay. And I will promise you that you sha'n't be unhappy—on my account."

"Yes," he said calmly, "but that's something you *can't* promise."

He lit another cigarette and blew out half a dozen rings; and leaned back in his chair, watching the bluish veils of smoke, in parallel layers, rise and fall and melt and form again in the quiet air.

Alicia's dry misery had reached its climax; her need of affection from him, of the touch of him, had become imperious, overmastering. She sat up, rose, came to him and sank down on her knees beside his chair; put up her arms and laid her head against him.

"Oh, do love me a little," she moaned.

"Alicia—dear—I *do* love you. I want you to be content."

"Oh, how can I be? You know why I'm not happy—you know why I can't be content," she said, in the same voice of suffering. "It's just that *you're* not happy—that I don't make you so—it's such an awful failure, all this, for me—"

"Poor girl, poor little girl. I must be a brute!"

"Oh, it isn't your fault! You're very good and sweet to me. It's only that you don't"—she could hardly speak the words, yet they forced themselves out—"you don't love me, you know." Her slender body trembled in his arms, and she broke into convulsive sobbing.

"Oh, Alicia, don't torment yourself

—and me! I do love you, my dear—we shall be happy together yet.”

“Oh, if I thought so! If I thought you could ever be content with me—I could wait years. I *wouldn't* torment you. But I *can't* feel it now, and it's that that makes me so irritable and ill-tempered—don't you know it is? I thought—I thought that since I loved you so much, I could take care of you, I could give you some happiness. But I see”—she lifted her head, and her tragic eyes met his—“I see that I've wanted too much. I feel I want to give you everything—and you don't want it all! And I can't help wanting more than you can give—and I *know* that I don't know what's in your mind. If I could feel that you were absolutely frank with me—but that's too much to expect. I know you want more freedom—but it kills me to give it to you. To feel that you have a life apart from me that I know nothing of! That there are other women, perhaps! Oh, when it means so much, so much to me to be with you like this, to touch you”—she drew his face down to hers, and closed her eyes slowly—“how can I bear to think there could be anyone else? And about going back to America—I *know* you are thinking of that woman. I feel it in your mind. How do I know that it isn't just for her that you go back?”

He put her gently away from him, and got up.

“You'll have to take my word for it, I suppose, that I wasn't thinking of her; that I was thinking only of what's best for you—for us. I have nothing to do with her, as you know. I shall probably never see her again. And I beg you won't bring up this sort of thing again. It's—very distasteful. It's really beneath you.”

And without another glance at the long white figure lying against the seat of the chair as though broken by a blow, he went out of the room into his own room and bolted the door.

Alicia's usual wild rush of repentance did not come this time. It would have found him in a less flexible mood than usual. He, too, had suffered a blow.

It was the first time in months that *she* had been alluded to, between them; and it was as though a longing, a desire long quiescent, had suddenly been revived, been roused into motion and sent toward her. George felt himself carried away by this sudden impetus; yet his last words to Alicia had been sincere. He did not think of seeing Isabel again. But he thought of her; she lived again in his mind and senses with an intensity not to be denied. He did not mean to see her—but, at least, he might, and he would, have news of her.

XIV

For some time after their return to New York Gay could find no trace of Isabel Morrison. She was not in any of the companies playing in the city, and a theatrical paper which gave news of companies on the road did not contain her name. At the hotel where she had been used to stay they had not seen her for nearly a year. Mrs. Mackaye, at a blunt question from George, shrugged her shoulders and said that Miss Morrison seemed to have dropped out of sight. Mrs. Mackaye herself was in hot pursuit of a new fad—book binding. But she dropped her tools to help Alicia in the hunt for a house. She was cool to George, as she had been ever since their memorable interview; his marriage, even, had not squared him with her. She pointedly made up to Alicia, and George wondered how much Alicia would confide to her. He didn't like the idea of having his conjugal difficulties discussed, and he wasn't sure that Alicia's pride would be proof against the appeal of Stella Mackaye's long friendship and sympathy. But at any rate, their new intimacy left him more free than he had been for many months.

He had made up his mind that he would not try to see Isabel Morrison, but he could not rest till he knew at least what had become of her. The information came finally through an acquaintance at his club—a newspaper

man, unsuccessful playwright and general gossip.

"Isabel Morrison? Of course I know her. She's here in town now, and likely to stay here for some time, too, I fancy. She played a two weeks' engagement here with the Warde company, but when they went out on the road she resigned. You see, she's tied up with a man who's drinking himself to death, and she's trying—"

"What man? How do you know?" demanded George.

"Oh, everybody knows who knows either of them. He's a newspaper man, Jack Dolliver. I used to work with him on the *Sun*, but now he's on the *Dispatch*. An awfully clever chap, brilliant talker and all that, but completely gone to pieces now. I haven't seen much of him lately—don't like to watch his pace, you know."

"How do you mean, 'tied up'?" George asked, moving his glass around on the table.

Stacey shrugged his shoulders. "Don't know how far it goes. They're together a lot, I know that, and she told me herself she wouldn't leave town, on his account. It's too bad for her. She ought to be doing something. And then his crowd is a pretty tough one for a woman like her. The men are interesting, in a way—clever enough, but too Bohemian even for me, don't you know. The sort that can't live off Broadway. And the women—well, they aren't *her* sort. It hurts her, of course. And I don't believe she can do him any good either, in the long run—in fact, his run's going to be a very short one, if I'm not mistaken. But I suppose she's in love with him. He's attractive to women, I know—yes, and he's an awfully good fellow, too. About the wittiest man I ever knew, I think, when he's half sober—"

George set his glass down sharply.

"Look here, are you sure about this?" he asked rather angrily. "It's easy to gossip, but you ought to be careful what you say about a woman—"

Stacey looked offended for a moment, then curious.

"I didn't know you were interested in Miss Morrison, old man, but this isn't gossip. She ought to be careful, herself, if she doesn't want things said. But she makes no bones about their intimacy—which may be purely Platonic, for anything I know. Only she goes about with him as much as she can in the Broadway gang—which isn't noted for Platonism. And she's spoiling her own prospects—at least, so far as this season goes. She may have some money of her own, I suppose—certainly he hasn't anything but his salary."

"You don't know where she lives?"

"No," said Stacey lightly. "She hasn't asked me to call on her. But I can—I'll tell you, if you want to see them both, I'll take you around tomorrow night to a studio blowout where they're sure to be. The artist chap is the cartoonist on the *Dispatch*, and a chum of Dolliver's. You might be interested in seeing *him*, too—he's one of the crowd. A Roumanian—descendant of some old emperor or duke or something. Truth, I assure you—at least, the rest of the Roumanian colony get down and kiss his boots when he wants them to. I go around there occasionally for old time's sake. It's the only place in New York where you get a touch of the old Paris feeling. . . . We want to happen in about twelve or half past. Well, what do you say?"

"Oh, I'll go," said George, and having made the appointment, he left his garrulous friend abruptly.

XV

THE studio was a large, bare room high up in an office building on Broadway. Through the open windows the mild breath of the October night and the street noises entered together. At midnight the room was thick with smoke. At one end a man at the piano was playing a gay waltz, and several couples were dancing in rapid foreign fashion. Thirty or forty other people sat about on the long divans or

clustered in corners talking, with frequent visits to the buffet, an enormous piece of oak covered with bottles and supper.

Among the men were a number of a dark, aquiline type, who kept rather to themselves. The women were even more mixed. George noticed in the first few minutes, while they stood in the doorway, a beautiful Italian—a model, Stacey said, two French girls, one of whom in the center of the floor now airily pointed a neat toe at the ceiling, and several others whose nationality he could not tell, but who were voluble and vivacious. He saw also in one corner a tall man with a rumpled shirt bosom and tossed black hair, who was making a speech amid loud laughter and applause. This, Stacey told him, was Jack Dolliver. Just then the host came up to greet them—a big swarthy man with an embroidered coat and a number of orders pinned to his broad chest—and swept them across the room to the buffet. Stacey inquired for Miss Morrison.

"Oh, yes, she's here," said the artist. "At least, she was a few minutes ago, and she usually takes Dolliver away, you know. Perhaps she's over there at the window."

The crowd was thickest at that end of the room. George dropped his friend with a nod and went slowly along till he caught sight of a well-known profile and a gleam of tawny hair; in another moment he had put out his hand to Isabel, who was sitting on a low couch smoking and talking to a man.

George stood with his back to the light, and she stared up at him for some instants blankly; then he saw her blush and her hand closed on his with a sudden, delicious warmth.

"Why, is it you? Where on earth have you come from?" she cried.

They both ignored the other man, who quickly took himself off, and George sat down in his place.

"Oh, I've been abroad. I came back ten days ago," he said, hardly knowing what his words were.

He was studying her, struck by some

change in her, trying to make out what it was. She was looking very well, very handsome, in a thin, black dress, discreetly high and showing just her round, strong wrists. Her glowing hair, piled high as she generally wore it, was burnished and beautiful as ever. Her look of vitality and vigor was, if anything, more marked; yet, he thought, she seemed melancholy, too.

This last impression remained with him and deepened as they talked. Her first looks and words for him had been vivacious and gay; but almost immediately she became quiet, perhaps from the effect of George's own manner. She seemed, however, very glad to see him. There was no sign of embarrassment, much less of resentment, in her way with him. She was sweet and kind and frank; and George's heart swelled with a sudden perception of her large nature. He had not seen her like this before; this was part of the change, or development, in her that puzzled him. He lost no time in coming to the point.

"What on earth are *you* doing in this galley?" he demanded, still intently questioning her face, her eyes.

She laughed a little. "Oh, marking time, I suppose. I'm doing nothing."

"Well, *why* are you doing nothing—just here?"

"Tell me, first, how do *you* come here, and why? I'm awfully curious."

"Oh, I came with Frank Stacey. I asked him about you, when I couldn't find you out."

"Well—he told you about me, I suppose. If so, you know why I'm here."

"I know what he told me. But I can't believe it—I can't understand it."

Isabel followed the direction of his eyes. The tall man with the excited manner and the tumbled black hair was now telling a German dialect story, and doing it inimitably well, George perceived. He looked at Isabel and she nodded.

"He's the cleverest creature," she said. "And has no more sense than a baby."

"Well, supposing he hasn't, what then?"

"Why, it's such a frightful waste, the way he's been going, the way he will go if he isn't held back. He has a real gift of expression; he's done some quite wonderful things—and all lost, buried in the newspaper grind. And he's such a dear, good fellow, too—endlessly good. And foolish enough, somehow, to be fond of me."

"Well, and you—what about you? What are you doing, wasting yourself? Your talent—I'll bet it's worth more than his, even if— And your life! What are you doing with your own life? . . . Are you in love with him, Isabel?"

At the opposite end of the room a new melody struck up—a song of the studios in which a score of voices were instantly uplifted. People began drifting up toward the piano, near which a girl was dancing wildly. There was now a clear space about the two on the couch. Isabel turned toward the window and leaned forward, her elbow on her knee, her chin in her palm.

"Well, look here—I don't mind your asking me. I suppose perhaps I am. I suppose I shouldn't care so much—or perhaps at all—what becomes of him—if I weren't," she said pensively.

George was silent for some moments.

XVI

"You perhaps—" he began again unsteadily. "You are sacrificing yourself to him—uselessly, too, very likely. Tell me—honestly—is it more for his sake—or for your own?"

"How can one say?" she smiled. "It's both. Don't you know?"

After a pause he said: "I suppose I know. When—I wanted to marry you, it was because—of course—I loved you! It was for myself, because I *wanted* to love you. And yet, it was for your sake, too. I wanted to do so much for you. I wanted to give you everything. Is that the way you feel—for him?"

"Something the way, I suppose.

It's such a wonderful thing to be able to give," she said softly.

"Oh, Isabel! But if it is too much—if you suffer from it, and you will, you must! What will become of you? Your profession, your—"

"I don't care," she said, with a dreamy gesture of indifference. "Do you know what I'm going to do? Jack has got a chance as correspondent for a weekly paper. He's been all over the world, and, as it happens, he speaks Russian. He's going to Manchuria. And I'm going with him as far as I can—perhaps to Japan. I suppose we shall be married. It may save him. Anything to get him out of New York!"

"Save him? Suppose it does—what about you? What can you do for him if you're not even to be with him? What will become of you there alone, Isabel?"

"Oh, it will steady him, if he marries—especially if I'm out there and can't fall back on my profession. Do you see? He'll *have* to keep steady—and he cares enough for me, I'm sure, to do it. He isn't," she laughed, "just as keen as he might be about *marrying*, but—"

"Isabel! You're throwing yourself away for him! For heaven's sake, don't take such risks as this; don't—"

"Oh, but I must! As for risks, I'm used to them. Have I lived in the lap of luxury and security, do you think? And it isn't all for his sake. No, I can't, I can't go on alone any longer; that's the truth. I knew last winter—when I knew you—that I couldn't."

George looked at her, at first startled, then more and more fixedly. She flushed slightly, but smiled, kept her composure, though she guessed, perhaps, what he was thinking.

He was thinking that her last speech held truth—so much of it, so clear and illuminating, that he could not take it all in at once, could not see at once all that it made vivid to him. In this sudden light he felt he understood the woman as never before. He could not but see how, these few months since, she had been within his reach. She had wanted to yield to his love for her; she

had wanted to take what he could have given her. She had not loved him—perhaps would not have cared as much for him as she did now for this other man. Yet an emotional awakening had begun in her with him, George Gay. Who knew what revulsion of feeling had thrown her upon Dolliver? She had been willing to take, to be the passive element, the beloved. Now, apparently, she was the active force. Either way, she was not to stand alone, on her own individual base. And perhaps it was his own wooing that had shaken her, made it impossible for her to go on alone.

He had not seen her once since the night of their parting, on the night of "Johannesfeuer," in New York. He had written her the outcome of his interview with Alicia in Chicago, and she had replied in a few kind and colorless words.

Now he knew that he could not go into that question. He knew that she had acted decisively, in such a way as to put beyond the pale of possible realization the faint vague hope that he had brought to her this night. She was now utterly beyond his reach, and about the past he could not speak.

After the long, long gaze that half expressed these thoughts of his, he looked away at the noisy crowd about the piano and was still silent. Then at last he said sadly: "Will you write me—from out there? And will you promise to let me know—if anything—if you ever need anyone—if I can help you?"

"Oh, I can't promise—" she began.

"Yes, you can! And you must. You can give me that much, Isabel."

He took out a card and wrote an address upon it, and she accepted it.

"You don't want to see him—Dolliver?" she asked gravely.

"No—no. I'm going now."

"But tell me—you're happy, George, aren't you? A little happy?"

She put her hand on his arm. They looked one another deeply in the eyes, and the memory of their one kiss rose between them. George's gaze passed over her face—brow, eyes, lips—like ghostly kisses.

"Happy enough," he murmured. "Good-bye, Isabel."

He laid her hand down, and got up and went out of the room, forgetting his host and Stacey.

It was nearly two o'clock, on the edge of the brief lull that nightly visits Broadway. George felt the coolness of the air, the sweetness of it, after the hot and smoky room. He walked back to the hotel where Alicia would be awake and awaiting him. He knew that he would have to give her now, before either of them slept, an account of this meeting. Isabel had been in her mind no less constantly than in his. The fever of her jealousy had burned visibly before him. Now she could be told of the end of everything between Isabel and himself.

And he felt that the end indeed had come—and knew that he had never felt it before. There was but a shadowy possibility that Isabel would ever need his help, or claim it. Humanly speaking, he had seen the last of her. He had lost his chance to give himself completely, perhaps to waste himself, to throw himself away. He had lost a definite, an ecstatic happiness.

What remained to him was to be loved—to be tyrannized over by the inevitable demand of love, the demand that never could be entirely satisfied. A vague pity for Alicia rose in him. Alicia, after all, suffered most. She loved passionately, and wished to give—but her need was so much greater than his that she was constantly in want, a beggar. Isabel—yes, certainly Isabel was happiest of the three.



IT is impossible to tell where an orderly woman will put things.

THE FOOL

By VIOLET MELVILLE

DOWN in the heart of Brazil, among the damp, fever breeding hollows of the rubber district, night was falling over Campanares. From their respective seats on the wide wooden veranda, where they had come to catch the earliest breath of the descending land breeze, the white men of the place exchanged occasional remarks upon the week-old topics which the tardy mail coach from far-away Sao Paulo had brought lumbering along in its wake earlier in the day. Above them and alone, standing before an upper window of the rambling plantation house, another white man looked fixedly out into the sad dusk. He was "The Fool."

Nearly a year before, he had come out to Brazil on the United Rubber Company's medical staff for one of the properties, and they had stationed him at Campanares, ten hours' ride from the village of Rocamonte, and sixty miles, as the crow flies, from any established center of civilization. It was a hard post to fill, for there the low fevers ran riot, and all the medicines had to be brought on muleback from the nearest town, so that sometimes, when there was an oversight and the supplies ran short, men died for the want of them. No other doctor had ever been known to tarry long in that district; indeed, few visited it at all, for the fame of Campanares had crept down to the very seacoast, and the fame was not enviable. Men do not walk into death traps with their eyes wide open—at least, not often; and when the other white dwellers upon the plantation—scapegraces and prodigal sons who were eating their

fill of the husks—learned that there was one coming who might almost be said to have chosen this life-sapping field for his work, they called him a fool for his pains.

A sudden burst of laughter from the veranda broke the perfect evening quiet, and the man at the open window turned quickly away as if the sound had hurt him. In the center of his big, bare room stood a large table littered with books and papers in many languages, and above this, suspended from a heavy rafter by a string, was a lantern. He lit it and, taking up one of the books, began to read. Presently another outbreak of merriment, louder and longer than the first, reached him; he laid down the book, and limping slowly across the floor—he was lame—closed the window gently. The men below caught the sharp "click" of the latch as it fell into place, and one of them jerked his chin toward the veranda roof, saying, "Hark at The Fool shutting out the sound of our levity." Then they laughed again.

There had never been any doubt in their minds as to the fitness of that name since the first evening, when their astounded, half-pitying glances met in mute question behind the dusty, travel-stained newcomer. Once in a while nature produces things that are beyond the reach of human sympathy and words. The Fool was one of these. From the hour of his birth God's hand had lain heavily upon him, making him not in His own image, but rather a caricature of it; silencing the voice of his affliction by a strange and ludicrous impediment of speech, that raised a barrier of unholy laughter

between him and his fellow men. Later in life accident had lamed him, and still later fate had laid him upon the rack of his ambitions and broken him upon the wheel of his heart's desire. What remained of him had come forth from that crucible of pain with but a single prayer upon his lips—to be forgotten of the world! To be granted the boon of oblivion! He had sought it in Campanares, Death's anteroom, and there, little recking what they did, men made sport of him, calling him The Fool. Alone he dwelt among them in that strange living silence which was the tragedy of his existence; dodging past them up the dark stairs, to take shelter from their thoughtless persecution in his cold quarters, as a hare flies to shelter in the covert; standing at his window—while they gathered in human fellowship beneath—to look straight away across the whispering treetops, to where the crosses of the Campanares dead lifted themselves against the barren hillside, white and awful in their stiff companionship, to peer down upon the living forgetfulness below.

II

WHEN Lionel Hadley Crayne—that was The Fool's name—came to Campanares there were just nine white men living up at the plantation house in the clearing. As many months before they had been twelve; but one had gone up the river on a hunting expedition from which he never returned, and the other two were among the heavy sleepers on the hill. The last of their names had only dropped out of the familiar, everyday conversation some five weeks before The Fool's arrival. Those remaining were a rough, happy-go-lucky lot, without refinements of feeling or sentiment, as becomes men who eat, drink and are merry because tomorrow they die. Not that they were godless, or worse than the rest of their kind, but they were just hardened by the heat of the days and the cold of the nights, by the

stress and the strain they passed through. That was a land where only the fittest could hope to come to the front, and their first impression of The Fool was that he hadn't any chance—that he would drift away, as so many other weaklings had done, out of the uneasy tides of their existence into calm anchorage among the crosses on the hillside. One day they even told him so, but they found out then that he was not afraid of death. Life had not been kind enough to him for that.

There were other ways, however, in which they made his probation a bitter one, taking no count of the unfairness of the trial, and calling him "a God-forsaken horse doctor" when, at the close of the rainy season, cholera swept the Indian settlements and thinned out the population as a strong wind thins out a canefield. But The Fool was as slow to anger as he was slow of speech, and little by little they learned to let him alone. Then one day they awoke to the knowledge that down in the Indian village people were calling him "Healing Light." From anyone but an Indian the irony of it would have been intolerable, but they didn't mean it that way at all. It was Loftus who first brought the news up to the Big House. The bookkeeper, a lawless spark of a Frenchman called Dupont, received it sneeringly, and wanted to know where the light came in. He had it all his own way in the beginning, for he passed as the wit of the place, and with damning precision he took off every halting movement of the small, lame figure and the slow, labored manner of speech, until his companions lay back gasping for very shame of such mirth in their chairs. There was but one who did not join in the cruel sport, a woman—a young thing, just passing through on her way to the coast. She turned upon them with scorn on her pale, pinched face.

"Do you really wish to know where the light comes in?" she asked. "Well, I will tell you. That man, whom you all call 'The Fool,' has got eyes like still water under the starlight, and the

love of all living creatures is in them. Look and see!"

In days that came afterward they often wondered how this one redeeming feature could have escaped them. Perhaps it was because they were so busy looking for the multitude of his defects.

Soon after that The Fool found a friend. It was this way. Down at Campanares there was an abundance of cats—cats of all colors and sizes, with particularly vicious habits, that prospered at everyone's expense. Once in a while, when they became too numerous for comfort, the men varied their daily monotony by setting traps about the place, such as are set for hares. No one ever knew who was to blame for the setting of one particular trap, but it was carelessly done, they all agreed; and when the gray kitten stumbled across it, instead of working as it was intended, it merely inflicted some horrible injuries across the back, and held the little creature mangled and shrieking, between its teeth. At the Big House they were all smoking on the veranda when this occurred, and through the hot stillness of the moonless evening the mad terror of that complaint cut like invisible knives. Dupont rolled out of his hammock, and Mansarti, the storekeeper, brought his tilted chair down upon its four legs with a bang.

"Caught!" he exclaimed. "Well, that's one less of the beggars." Then as the wild clamor swelled up afresh, he swore and reached out slowly for the long hunting knife where it hung on the rack above him.

"I suppose someone will have to help it die," he grumbled. "Curse the luck, and that clumsy trap! Come on, Dupont."

But there was no need, for almost before the words were spoken a slight, white-clad figure pushed past them all and was gradually swallowed up into the mysterious gloom of the encroaching undergrowth.

"That's the lonely party from upstairs," observed the Frenchman, turning back to his hammock with a sigh of

relief. "Wonder what he'd say if he knew we set the traps?"

"H'm!" said someone else, between long puffs at a cigar; "it is rather beastly, don't you know."

When The Fool came back, he was walking very slowly, holding against his blood-bespattered coat something small that quivered and panted and choked sickeningly at every few steps he took. They heard him go upstairs and close the door of his room. A few moments later anesthetics heavy and sweet of smell stole out into the night air from the windows overhead, and the horrible, suggestive strangling ceased. Many days later, the gray kitten came crawling out of the Doctor's room. Its fur was like new-spun satin, and it showed very plainly the humanity and tenderness of one man. But it was deformed—hopelessly, terribly deformed—and there was a place across the back where the trap had caught it, on which no hair would ever grow. In fact, notwithstanding its very evident enjoyment of the comforts of life, the nine downstairs were inclined to believe that the best solution of the problem had lain after all in Mansarti's hunting knife. To The Fool, of course, this argument was meaningless; but as soon as he found that they did not take kindly to his pet he carried it back to his room and they seldom saw it about after that.

III

So up there in the cheerless silence, evening after evening, the deformed man and the distorted animal drew closer together, held by who knows what affinity of fates and dumb suffering. Once or twice, when a rare chance carried any of the other men to the Doctor's room, they had found him very quietly reading, the kitten curled within the hollow of his arm; and when, in the waning light, he would lay aside his book and take up his slow, regular walk before the windows, they knew that he carried the little unsightly body pressed hard against his own.

But these things were not all. Through the long, many-voiced blackness of a Brazilian night, when the dark veranda lay silent and empty, the kitten had known its bedfellow to steal away and stand among the vacant chairs, as if they had a message for him—some lingering echo of the light hearts that had earlier filled them; it had seen a man's head bowed down beside its own, and learned the feeling of tears—a man's hard, noiseless tears—upon its glossy fur. And then, without prelude of any sort, the end of this friendship was upon them, sudden and sharp as the snapping of the trap that began it.

They all knew that Dupont had been drinking. Not to excess on any particular day, but unsociably and systematically for weeks past, locking himself into the office with the neglected account book night after night until dawn was yellowing in the sky. So when he rose from the breakfast table one Sunday morning and suggested a visit to the Doctor's room—Dr. Crayne always ate alone—everyone foresaw trouble. One or two, remembering that there had always been more than a spice of antagonism in his mocking attitude toward The Fool, even tried to dissuade him, but to no purpose, for in the end he went stumbling up the stairs by himself.

"His eyes looked ugly," said Hermann Weyrauch, when he had passed out of earshot. "I wish he would leave The Fool alone. Why don't we go and pull him back?"

Weyrauch was a very decent sort, as men went in Campanares.

"Take my tip," drawled Hurl, the assistant bookkeeper, "and leave Dupont to look after his own affairs. I guess the Doctor's dealt with his kind before. All I can tell you is, that he doesn't look one bit uglier than he feels. It's been hell to pay in the office for a week past."

"Getting generous with your advice, Hurl?" asked Ryan sleepily. "Pity, though! He's not half a bad sort, Dupont isn't, but drink is the deuce and all for changing a man. The deuce and all!"

Meanwhile, Dupont gained the landing at the head of the stairs, and entered the Doctor's room with a loud stamping of feet and slamming of doors. What transpired after that remained forever a question. When he came to his right senses Dupont had forgotten, and The Fool never told. But at the end of some fifteen minutes, when those below were becoming anxious, the sharp, wild scream of an animal in pain brought them all to their feet in a moment.

"The kitten!" said Hurl. "I thought as much."

Mansarti, who was nearest the door, wrenched it open in a flash, and they crowded out into the passageway at the foot of the steep flight of steps. At the same instant the doors above flew noisily apart, and Dupont appeared upon the landing. He had the gray kitten in one hand, and with the other arm he ward off Dr. Crayne, with the consummate ease of a grown man holding a child at bay.

"You think you can fight me, do you?" he snarled. "You sickly, lame-legged quack, you! You left-handed, stammering mockery of a man! Bah! Take your vermin—I don't want it."

With an evil laugh he raised the struggling kitten above his head and dashed it down at the full strength of his brutal arm. It never even quivered when it fell; the height had been too great.

"You beast!" shouted Ryan, starting up the steps. The next second he shuddered back, covering his eyes with his hand, for with one sweep of his powerful frame the Frenchman had taken The Fool off his feet and pushed him, head foremost, from the landing. The helpless human body came thudding down swiftly, lodging for a breathing space at the angle of the stairs, turning convulsively and falling again more slowly. When it was within two feet of him Ryan put out his hand and arrested it. "Doctor," he whispered, "Doctor Crayne . . . for God's sake!"

By way of answer the Doctor rose unsteadily to his feet. His dark eyes were literally ablaze, and the first in-

stinctive thing he did was to push away the friendly grasp that held him, and lean upon the balustrade instead. For once—the only time in all their experience of him—he was insensible to a service rendered.

"Leave me," he panted. "You have had your sport—leave me."

He sank down upon the stairs again and dropped his colorless face, damp with moisture, into his hands. Then deliberately—with that strange confusion of sounds which served him for words—he began to speak. The network of conventionalities and the guard of silence with which he covered the nakedness of his affliction had fallen from him together, and cold and terrible in its humiliation, grim, hopeless, austere in its loneliness, the man's cramped, palpitating soul took form upon his quivering lips.

"Leave me," he said again. "You have mocked me, shunned me, taunted me for a fool, and now you have half killed me. Surely it is enough."

It was as if the long pent-up anguish of the months behind had swept over him suddenly, and swamped his self-control in its bitterness.

"Ah! you don't understand—you *can't* understand what you have done. To you it was only a kitten like any other, but it filled my world. None of you ever tried to do that, and I have never expected it. Men"—he included them all in one comprehensive gesture—"men like you don't fraternize with—*things* like me, and perhaps it is well that you shouldn't. But the kitten was different; it was only a dumb brute, and it could not see the hideousness of me, any more than it could realize that its own hideousness was the strongest link in the chain that bound it to me. I used to sit and school myself to look upon its deformity with unmoved eyes, so as to take the sting out of the intimate horror of what I know myself to be. And I loved it, for I owed it something. I saved it to be what it was; it had not asked to live any more than I did. I"—there was another spasmodic movement of the hands that covered his face—"I have

sometimes questioned the justice of God in making me at all; and many a night in the room upstairs, when you were merrymaking beneath the windows, nothing greater than the kitten has stood between me and the madness of my thoughts."

He paused suddenly, and turned towards the heap of gray fur on the floor. A look of something awful came over his face, and he got stiffly to his feet and began to come down the remaining steps.

"Clear out!" said Ryan, waving those behind him away. "Let us all clear out and shut the doors." But even with the doors shut they could not help hearing when the halting feet paused, and The Fool lifted the dead animal to his breast.

"God!" he said quite aloud. "Oh, God!—God!—God!"

Then there was silence.

IV

FOR ten days after that no one saw The Fool with the exception of the servant who took up his meals, and he brought word that the Doctor was always to be found lying in a long cane chair before the window. They gathered from this that he had suffered injury from the fall, but some inexplicable feeling bade them respect that closed door and forbear to inquire. Then, on the tenth day, Dupont fell ill. Hurl, in pink sleeping suit and great trepidation, knocked at Mansarti's door on Tuesday morning, and unburdened his soul. He had always shared a room with Dupont. It was fever, he said, with a few alcoholic complications thrown in for the sake of variety, and the Doctor would have to be called. So about half an hour later, in response to Hurl's message, the Doctor came down. He was looking thin and limping terribly; indeed, he could hardly walk at all without the aid of a stick.

"Thank you," he said to Ryan, who met him in the dining room. "No, I have not been ill. Is Dupont's door the third or fourth in the passage?"

When he came out after paying his visit to the sick man his face was very grave. Instead of returning to his room as they had expected, he took a chair near the end of the passage, and sat looking thoughtfully out through the open doorway.

"You mustn't mind me," he said presently to Hurl. "Your friend is rather ill, and I want to see him again in a few moments. I should go up to my room, but the stairs"—with the shadow of a smile—"the stairs are steep and they tire me." He glanced down involuntarily at his leg and turned back to the door.

"Doctor," said Hurl, acting on a sudden impulse, "are you badly hurt?"

The Fool looked round with something like surprise not untouched by constraint.

"Hurt? Oh, no, it was nothing. It has passed."

"But the stick . . . Will it be long before . . ."

The Fool looked away, and hesitated.

"It will be all my life," he replied at last. Then, as the passionate regret in the other man's face struck him, he added hastily: "But don't let that worry you, Hurl. It was always rather bad, and my beauty can take a lot of spoiling."

With the day's decline Dupont grew rapidly worse. After three o'clock in the afternoon Dr. Crayne hardly left his bedside, and when evening fell he ordered one of the servants to bring down the cane chair and a couple of rugs for him. "I shall stay down here tonight, perhaps tomorrow," he told Loftus, who overheard the request. "No, there isn't any cause for anxiety—yet, but it is best to be on hand. Besides, it will save someone else the trouble of sitting up. Tiring? Well, a little, but then it's my work, you know, and there is always the whole day to rest in."

Through the weeks that followed a shadow settled upon the dwellers up at the Big House. Dupont's place was not one to be easily filled, and hope grew faint as day succeeded day without bringing any appreciable change in

the darkened room. Even the Doctor lost his little trick of smiling confidently into the questioning faces, and strange lines penciled themselves upon his own; but his interest never wavered, nor the faithful, untiring service that knew no limit of light or darkness, although the purple rings lay an inch deep in the hollows under his eyes. And in the end, when the long, unhealthy dry season was drawing to a close, the shadow of death spread its dark wings and passed away from the house. One morning very early, as the other men sat at coffee, The Fool appeared in the doorway. He was unshaven and sharp-featured for lack of sleep, and the words did not come any more readily than of old; but, ah! they did not see these things with the same eyes now, for they had watched him strive mightily for a life that was one of their own, and the result of that striving was written upon his queer, plain face with a beauty that nothing could dim.

Hurl spoke first, an odd break in his voice: "He will live, Doctor? Bully for you, by Jove!"

As Mansarti observed one day shortly after, the tale of the white men at Campanares was getting to be rather unpleasantly like the old nursery rhyme which begins: "Ten little niggers sitting in a line; one fell off and then there were nine." It was good to think that, for a time, at least, the falling off process had been checked. And in this thought, and the sight of Dupont's white, hollow face grinning cheerfully up out of the hammock, lay the first beginning of the love where-with in after days they loved The Fool.

Meanwhile, together with his cane chair and his rugs, Dr. Crayne had stolen quietly back to his room above, leaving the man he had saved to foregather with his friends as in times past. Up there in the sunny solitude of working hours and the chill darkness of nights, he took up, one by one, the threads of his old existence just where he had laid them down when Dupont fell ill, but he walked no more before the open windows when the daylight died. He

would draw up the cane chair instead, and stretch himself upon it, staring away and away into the fathomless sea of shadows with his mournful, inscrutable eyes. But one evening after dinner there were voices, or rather a voice, in the Doctor's room, and when the men assembled upon the veranda Dupont's hammock swung empty in the breeze. They passed it over in silence, for under the dull green of the rubber trees chief of all unwritten laws was this: that a man should mind his own affairs. Later on, however, Dupont appeared, and as he settled himself and lighted a cigar he remarked suddenly: "Don't you think that some of us might make a point of dropping in upon the Doctor now and then? He tells me that—since he hurt his leg, his work is as much as he can manage with those stairs, so it's up to us to make the first move."

Ryan, who was balanced insecurely on the veranda rail, turned his head with suspicious quickness, but when he spoke his voice was perfectly level. "Right," he said, replying for all, "if we'll not be too much in the way, but—while I think of it, Dupont, what was that I heard you saying this morning about the new import duties upon liquor?"

V

AFTER that evening it seemed the most natural thing in the world for one or two to drift from the dinner table into the Doctor's room; and, as the weeks passed, the indefinable attraction that hovered in the atmosphere drew the company by threes and fours, until the veranda came to be a haunt for bats and other winged creatures of the night alone. Whenever their various duties permitted it, the merry crowd assembled, closing in, quick of wit and light of heart, around the cane chair with its silent occupant. And when, from across half the world, they looked back upon that life in Campanares, it was so that they chose to remember it, reaching out to something better and

higher than the mere bread of every day, among the half lights and the peace of that upper room.

Moon upon moon waxed and waned, and August faded into December as if by magic. That was the second year of The Fool's life at Campanares, and on the evening of the thirty-first he came limping down to dinner. This was a great concession, for the old sensitive shrinking back, the old habits of eating and sitting alone, had never been wholly laid aside. The man looked much changed; he had been hardly strong of late, and there was some talk of sending him away from Campanares for a rest, but he was unwilling to go.

"Don't try to get rid of me," he would say. "I hate strangers, and you haven't so very much longer to suffer, you know. In December next my time here will be out, and then . . . well, perhaps I shall go home. Who can tell?"

That evening, as soon as dinner was over, The Fool excused himself. He was going back to his room, he said, and would wait for them there; they must all come. After he had gone, Dupont sat very silent at the head of the table, fingering the rim of his glass thoughtfully. Suddenly he rose and stood facing the others, glass in hand.

"Gentlemen," he began abruptly, "ever since I came to Campanares we have made it a custom to drink on this night to those few across the seas who are dear to us. It is our one spoken recognition of the home ties that still bind us. Tonight I am going to ask you to reverse the order of things, and begin by drinking with me to one here." He lifted the glass a little higher than all might see. "It is The Fool, messieurs."

And they passed it on, from the bright circle of lamplight near Dupont's place to the last man standing to honor the toast at the foot of the table, "The Fool—The Fool!"

On the seventh day of the new year the plague—which for months past had been scouring the Pacific coast of South America—made its appearance in the

interior of Brazil. Ten weeks later it came to Rocamonte.

"I am not surprised," said Dr. Crayne when the men crowded up to him, grave of face and anxious, bringing the news. "The wonder is that it did not happen before. Personally, I have been on the lookout a long time, making such provision as I could against infection among the Indians here. You will find things a little cleaner down in the village, and that is all-important. This afternoon we will redouble the precautions, and there will be fumigations and all sorts of nice things going on. And remember," he added kindly, "there will be plenty of time to pull long faces when I give the signal. Don't begin now."

They listened to that quiet, hesitating voice like children who are frightened by the darkness, and then, without looking in each other's eyes, took up their courage in both hands and turned away.

The following day all the laboring hands that could be spared, together with the women and the children, were sent away to more distant properties, so as to lighten the burden of those who would have to be cared for in case of a visitation. Then every nook and corner of Campanares underwent a rigorous cleansing under the Doctor's supervision, until soapsuds and other things less inoffensive pervaded with their smell the very atmosphere of dreams. At that high tension all lived for the following two months, and Mansarti, who was growing ethereal with much scrubbing in the storeroom department, began to lose his fine appreciation of that state which is said to be next to godliness.

"When the plague is over," he would announce viciously, "I sha'n't wash my face for a month. It will be such a relief to feel just comfortably reckless for once. I wager I can smell carbolic in the soup this minute."

So did they manage to make light even of death.

When February came the doom of Rocamonte was sealed, or so it seemed for a little while. People read in the official

journals that the Government, suddenly awakening to the desperate straits of the villagers—a retired apothecary was all the doctor they had—had advertised for medical volunteers to go there, and that none were forthcoming. With the plague here, there and everywhere, as it was, the volunteers had been exhausted, perhaps, or else none of them cared to die in such a forgotten hole, and for such a lost cause. This was almost excusable. Rocamonte, sunk among the winding foothills, with its eight thousand-odd souls, was very picturesque; but Rocamonte, with its one broad road that led into the village and tailed away at the other end until you lost it among the swaying broom weed that overran the graves in the Campo Santo, was for all the world like one of those traps with which mice are decoyed to destruction through the glamour of an ample doorway that opens only once.

"It is very terrible," said The Fool, speaking of this matter one day. "Of course, whoever goes in there now as good as leaves hope behind; still, someone . . ."

VI

ONE morning about two weeks later Ryan, who was always the first up, surprised the small, lame figure booted and spurred, standing behind a screen of cactus to the left of the house.

"Going out for a ride, Doctor?" he asked in his cheery way.

The Fool looked up with a start. "Hush," he replied very softly. "I did not wish you—any of you—to know, but there was some mistake about the horse. I wanted the oldest mount upon the place, something that is of no value, and I have sent the boy back to look for it, so it can't be helped. I have left a letter on my table explaining everything, and I must get away quietly before the others dress. I don't want to go, for, although I am a doctor, I have always shrunk from certain diseases, and this is horrible—

horrible! But someone must. I hope you'll understand."

When Ryan entered the dining room that morning Dupont had not yet appeared. The Irishman walked straight across to his chair without looking to right or left and sat down all in a heap, leaning his head on his hand. From the fringe of his dark hair to the collar of his colored shirt, his face was absolutely and uniformly gray. Hermann Weyrauch glanced at him keenly as he passed; a moment later he turned and followed him to his place.

"What's up, Ryan?" he asked kindly, laying his large hand lightly on the younger man's shoulder. "You don't look quite yourself. Is it the fever? Let me call The Fool."

At the sound of that name Ryan sprang up, shaking off the other's touch as one brushes away a fly. He walked over to the windows hastily, pausing before each of the three in turn to look out. There was nothing to see but the sharp ridge of the cactus fence, and beyond it the fresh green of young leaves rustling in the early morning sunshine. Something in the familiar outlook seemed to unnerve Ryan.

"The Fool!" he exclaimed, turning to face the German suddenly; "there isn't any Fool at Campanares now. I said good-bye to him half an hour ago behind that hedge. He has gone away."

Then he pulled himself together and told them all he knew. They were still standing in helpless silence round him when Dupont's door opened, and they heard him come leisurely down the passage whistling the "Marseillaise." And it was terrible! Not because those who were present loved the Doctor less, but because Dupont—by reason of that natural law which decrees that those who sin deepest shall deepest atone—loved him even better.

That night the papers that reached Campanares—they were four days old—informed the public through the medium of five printed lines that one volunteer, and one alone, had offered himself for Rocamonte. His name was Lionel Hadley Crayne.

When they came to read the letter that The Fool had left upon his table, they found that his departure, which had come upon them like a dream in the night, was the result of a long and wearing battle with self. The haste of his going had not been so great but that at times the magnitude of his undertaking seemed temporarily to overwhelm him. There were places in that letter where it was easy to see that the practical, well-balanced mind of the physician had given way suddenly before the raw emotions of the mere man. Here and there the armor of scientific stoicism would fall a little apart, disclosing the shrinking human nature underneath, and the sight was not pleasant. Mind and matter alike recoiled at the thought of the loathsome stronghold of death. Flesh and blood uprising, in spite of intellectual barriers arrayed against them, clamored with two-fold madness for recognition of that first and greatest of animal instincts, the instinct of self-preservation. Seen, as they saw it, all unconsciously portrayed upon paper, the man's soul was livid with fear; from first to last it was dumbly appealing—with silent, immeasurable woe of foreknowledge—against its own decree. He knew, in all its unspeakable hideousness and corruption, the cup from which he was about to drink, and bending toward it at the last, the wild horror of its foulness overcame his courage for a while. Still he went, and surely the fortitude of that going can only be proven by the might of the weakness that dragged at him to hold him back. Beside the avowed frailty of his farewell letter to his friends was set the calm, hopeful strength of his departure, when he turned his face relentlessly northward and rode away from Ryan with a set smile on his lips. He embodied then the highest ideal of bravery a man may hold: he understood, he was afraid, and yet—he dared!

By copies of letters which had been exchanged with the head office it was found that Dr. Crayne, in asking to be released from his contract, had bound

himself over to return, if he lived, and complete the few remaining months of his term at Campanares. It was with this understanding that he had finally gone to Rocamonte. It was with this hope set daily before them that those who were left behind rose up to face the cold, suggestive stillness of the room upstairs, and the veil of mystery that had closed about its living occupant in the damp grayness of the dawn. The strictest quarantine regulations hemmed Rocamonte in from all intercourse with the outer world, and the ten hours' ride that lay between Dr. Crayne and Campanares held him as effectually apart from the men there as the six feet of fresh earth on a grave divide the living and the dead. With something of the heavy hopelessness of death, too, did the inmates of the Big House look up at the blank windows that stared down upon them as they rode in from the day's work, shunning, amid their stream of lighter observations, the mention of one name, while all about them the great silence of the night lifted up its wordless longing for the man who was not. By common consent they sought forgetfulness in the old places on the veranda, thereby outraging a colony of bats that had taken possession. Here they would sit and make believe to talk, but on many evenings it was only a pretense of the poorest kind, and the end was always the same. Dupont would throw away his half-smoked cigar, and without warning sit up in his swaying hammock, clasping his hands about his knees. "I wonder . . ." he would begin, his eyes fixed hungrily on the nothingness of the darkness. Presently he would slip away quietly, and go to bed. That was how they remembered The Fool at Campanares.

VII

ALL the while, just hidden from their sight by ten hours of dusty road and a spur or two of the blue foothills, among the desolated homes of the sunny little village the flower of the

Doctor's life service was opening to its close. What the real history of that struggle was no man has come forward to say, but the rough outline of it is written broad and bold on the lonely valley in characters of earth. You can read it any day as you ride along the edge of the Haunted Dip where, looking down, the eye picks out the long furrows, marked by a cross at each end to show where they piled in the dead. That is the old plague burial ground, which The Fool opened and closed. Something it will tell you about the weight with which the hand of Pestilence fell upon those unsuspecting wretches, living, marrying and making merry in the remote village of Rocamonte. Something, too, about the godlike struggle which one man made to shake it off. It is true that he was twisted, lame, incoherent of speech, bat-eared and physically puny, but what does that matter now? Which of those to whom he appeared in their Gethsemane, with the promise of life held out, will ever set that against him when they weigh him in the scale with other men?

The plague ran itself out, as everything will, and on the last day of October the quarantine was raised. The next day The Fool came "home." Just as dusk was deepening and closing in upon Campanares, there was a sound of horses' feet plodding carefully over dry twigs. A moment later they had turned the cactus hedge and come to a sudden halt in front of the house.

When everyone else drew back Dupont was still standing in the center of the clearing holding The Fool crushed up against his heart, and in the bold, handsome face which he bent down above the Doctor there was something wonderful and holy, that outweighed a thousand-fold the tenderness of women. Looking up, The Fool read it, and in a sort of benediction that was new to that land and that life, he lifted his hand and touched the Frenchman. With that touch the last stiver of the debt between them was wiped away.

They drew the Doctor in under the lamplight and crowded about him with

a thousand eager questions on their lips, and a thousand other unspoken thoughts in their eyes, which told him how high they ranked the thing that he had done. He stood among them listening while they talked as one man—for they had laid aside their reserve—then in the final pause he opened his lips to reply, but all he said was: "It is going round! The walls!—the floor!—the world!" And with that he stumbled forward and lay still at their feet.

VIII

THAT was the manner of Lionel Hadley Crayne's second coming to Campanares. He never left it again. Day after day in that upper room he sat very faintly smiling, empty-handed and with closed eyes, as if he were absorbed in drinking in the rare charm of absolute idleness after the unceasing labors of Rocamonte. Below stairs men fell into the habit of walking with careful steps and speaking with bated breath, for gradually they began to realize that the man who had returned to them out of the fiery furnace of torment and terror was not the man who had ridden away on that March morning. Something of himself had The Fool left behind among those hundreds of nameless graves, and it seemed as though he was going back to join it. Without any known illness or suffering, he was slipping away from them, going further and further out into the borderlands of eternity every evening, while they gathered about the poor shadow that lay in the old cane chair.

"This is December, is it not?" he asked one night a little wistfully. "I was to have gone home in December. You won't think I mind staying here if I seem to weary of the place sometimes, will you? It is—almost sad to think that I shall not see an English sky again. The skies here are bluer, perhaps, but an English sky covers home. You understand that, don't you? It is like the dream of spring flowers and the little children picking

them in the fresh English meadows that used to haunt me all during the first weeks of my stay in Rocamonte, where there were only the corpses festering, four and five in a house."

That night Dupont mounted a boy and sent him off on a two days' ride to another plantation where they had a resident doctor. When he came back to the house Ryan was holding forth hopefully to the rest of the men on the probabilities of The Fool's recovery, and as the Frenchman appeared he appealed to him for support; but gravely and slowly Dupont shook his head.

"No go, Ryan," he said, putting out his hand. "Don't cheat yourself any more. Between us here, and those at Rocamonte, we have killed him. Good night."

It lacked five days to Christmas when one evening, as they were rising to take their leave, Dr. Crayne lifted his hand and beckoned them back. There were only four of them, Ryan, Hurl, Loftus and Dupont, for they had lately agreed to take it in turns to go up, so that the Doctor's room might be quieter.

"Stay," he said simply. "I am not sleepy tonight."

They reseated themselves at once, and to break an awkward silence Ryan observed abruptly: "Three years ago there were only nine of us here at this time; you didn't come until the middle of January, Doctor."

"No," said The Fool, "not until the middle of January, and now I am going away."

Then with a very calm face he turned to Dupont.

"There is something I want you to promise me, something I want done when I am dead. No," he entreated as the Frenchman leaned forward impulsively, "don't interrupt me; there is nothing to be sorry about. I have known that I was dying for a long time, since the close of the quarantine, and I came back here to die. I want to set out on that journey from this room. I—I love this room, and when I am gone from it you must not put another man in here to live. Just close the

shutters and speak of it always as mine, —as The Fool's, you know."

Dupont shifted his position so that his hand might shade his face from the light. It was *his* name; *he* had given it, and here was the retribution. The slow, quiet voice went on. Now that speech came so deliberately, the old stammering was hardly noticeable.

"You must not think—any of you—that I mind that name now. I should like to tell you, since I am dying, that there was a time when I hated it. I came to Campanares to forget that I was I, and it was an ever present reminder of my failure. One night in particular, I remember, there was a woman here, a stranger, and Dupont—"

The hand that shaded Dupont's face trembled a protest, but he did not try to defend himself from what was coming, for, though the reckoning was gall and wormwood to him, he saw the justice of it all.

"—Dupont made mock of me, until I cried out to God to rid me of myself. I saw myself then as other men must have always seen me—a thing apart from the rest of my kind. That hurt stayed with me a long while, and the name you had given me rankled, because I saw that it fitted me as his motley and bells fit a clown. But another night, last New Year, I heard 'The Fool' upon your lips again. I had stopped to rest midway upon the stairs, and I could not help but hear. Somehow the sound of it had changed. When the last man of you had spoken I crept on up here and sat by this window, going back—going over—thinking. Before you came I had found out that to be Fool among you was destiny enough. Now that I am dying . . ."

He hesitated, and laid his hand on Dupont's arm. When he spoke next, it was to the Frenchman alone.

"Now that I am dying, I feel that I would rather be remembered by it than by any other name on earth. This will be for you to see to. I know that you are skilled in wood carving—I have watched you at work sometimes—therefore . . ." The thin fingers tightened pleadingly upon the other's

sleeve. "Most of the names out there on the hill are painted upon the wooden crosses, and in years, with sun and rain, some have quite disappeared, so that the thing below is nameless, and no one can claim kinship with it. I do not want that to happen to me; therefore . . ." Once again there came that tightening of thin fingers. "It will be no great task; only 'The Fool,' and, if you wish, the date."

Then Dupont bowed his head over the hand that lay upon his arm.

"I cannot do it," he said between deep breaths. "Anything but that—any name. Do not ask me again; I would rather cut my hand off. *O, très cher, ne me demande pas ça.*"

The Fool turned wondering eyes upon the speaker.

"I thought you understood that everything has been repaid threefold. Don't you see?"

Dupont shook his head without speaking. In his eyes the past stood paramount.

"Why," continued the Doctor, gravely and kindly, "I would rather have 'The Fool' written over me than my father's name. Lionel Hadley Crayne, they will tell you in England, was a poor thingummy who dreamed dreams, but The Fool—you loved him."

Then the promise was given.

When they said good night to the Doctor that night it was with a strange sense of having touched the real man at last. They knew so much more now of the meaning of that solitary pacing before the open windows, and of the emotions which had dashed themselves out within the space of the four bare walls. He could never again be just "The Fool." He had drawn the breath of another man's life into his lungs, and he was a personality forevermore because of the other man's suffering and sacrifice.

Dupont was the last to come up to the Doctor's chair, and he stood beside it for several moments looking down in stern, rugged sorrow upon the man he loved. At the sight of him a smile of infinite sweetness and understanding flitted across The Fool's pale face, and

shone through the haunting weariness that slept ever in his beautiful eyes. He put out both his hands in a little boyish gesture.

"Dupont . . . good night."

For answer Dupont bent over the chair, and quite simply before the three who waited on him, kissed The Fool upon his mouth. It was as if he had known. For when the dawn of the next day came whitely over the misty hills, the roll call of the white men at Campanares—as once three years before—was nine. During some dark hour of the silent night the Presence had come in to him at last, and The Fool had met it without fear, lying in the old cane chair before the open window. They found him there next morning, his rough hair stirred by the night winds, and almost gold against the pallor of his forehead; his sealed lips still faintly smiling at them out of the peace into which he had entered.

"So," said Hurl gently, as he turned the shutter to keep out the lengthening sunbeams, "he has gone home in December, after all."

At nine o'clock the doctor they had summoned came. He was really distressed when Weyrauch met him and told him that The Fool was dead. He had been absent and missed Dupont's messenger, he said, and there had been cases of smallpox on his return which he could not leave; then he had been laid up with a sprain for a week. All these things he told them almost before he dismounted, pouring them out amid a constant stream of regrets, and making much bustle and haste now that the need for haste was past. Then he asked to see that which lay smiling in the quiet room above. They led the way up the creaking stairs, but on the threshold they drew back, and the man of science went in alone.

IX

WHEN he came out a complete change had passed over his manner. The noisy confusion of words was

checked, and he did not speak professionally.

"I knew him," he said simply. "I was at Guy's the day he passed. He carried everything before him, and I believe his record at Oxford was the same—a wonderful mind. The men who trained him expected great things of him, but he lost the incentive to achieve at the start, and he gave up his high ambitions. You see, there was a woman who loved him, and she died. I attended her in the last stages of her illness, and I saw that upon the man's life her mark was everywhere. She had chosen for her field of work the world of interests that lay beneath the physical barriers that hemmed him in, and it was springing into something like glory at her touch when her hands laid down the task. I don't know if you follow me, but what I am trying to tell you is that the very mainspring of Lionel Crayne's brief success lay in the fact that one woman believed in him and told him so. I think she made him feel that his creation was not a mistake, because she appealed to him just where he was strong and would not have her appeal denied. And it is no wonder that he buried himself down here to get away from the dust of his dreams. I could almost have foretold it, for when I saw him straighten up from leaning over that deathbed, I read it in his face that he and Fame were to be strangers. From that hour the will to strive, like the body it had inspired, was lamed. And now to think of my finding him here like this! After Rocamonte, too, wasn't it grand? Poor Crayne, the pity is that his life might easily have been saved; nothing in the world wrong with him but weak heart action and overstrain. Died at about three this morning, I should say, probably in his sleep. Shall we go downstairs now?"

That afternoon they buried him in the little cemetery.

No one ever knew where Dupont spent that first night while The Fool slept dreamlessly out on the wind-swept hill, with the newly turned

earth pressing in lightly around him. Certainly he was not with Hurl, nor was he resting, for in the morning the cross for the grave was lying carved and ready to be placed, on a table in the passage. It was beautifully done, but the dumb wood showed something more than beauty—something deeper that lay near to the worker's heart. As Ryan and Loftus saw it that morning, this was what Dupont had carved upon the cross:

Sacred to the Memory of The Fool.
Aged Twenty-nine.

And below—as if the hand had refused to be stayed,

"Bien-aimé."

"I could not," he explained when he came out and found them standing there, "I could not leave it like that. It was all right for us—we knew; but some day a stranger might come, and having read that name, turn away with a laugh from his grave. I could not stand that; the fear of it would haunt me, and so . . ."

And so it stands in silent testimony above him, holding in its strange contradiction of words the Alpha and Omega of the three years' struggle which he made; shielding, with the tenderness of that "Well Beloved," The Fool from the laughter of his kind.

Over in Rocamonte they have built up a stone cross at the entrance to the village. It is the first thing the traveler sees as he turns the curve of the road, and little children who were unborn when it was erected have grown up to manhood and womanhood since, for it is nearly forty years old. Cut into the grain of the rock 'is The Fool's name, Lionel Hadley Crayne, and among the villagers it is a name to conjure by. Mothers teach their toddling babies to put fresh grasses and flowers on it when they pass that way, and so it happens that there is always something tender and living under that beloved lettering, as if it were the memory of the man himself made visible.



A P O R T R A I T

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

WAS this once you, sad cynic of the masquerading world?

This face, untouched by any violet light
Of dull or sharpened pain—

These eyes, gray firmaments alive with half-waked dawn,
As if a sudden rain

Had swept athwart them ere the light was wholly born;

These lips, just faintly curved, as if some song

Of joy and dream were prisoned there

Unwilling to be free. Like silk of corn

The vagrant curling of your baby hair

Lies soft about your face and crowns your head

With misty radiance—damp, exquisite little curls

Like golden tendrils of some vague, enchanted vine.

Eyes and lips and hair all soft and sweet—

Beloved and beloving of caress

And tenderness, and all that goes to make

Your baby heart the fine, brave thing it is

Of gold and dreams! . . .

Was this once you, sad cynic of the masquerading world?

THE CASE OF GOOD OLD BERTIE

By VANDERHEYDEN FYLES

ALL the fellows are fearfully cut up about it. And the deuce of it is no one can offer sympathy to old Bertie. Of course, if a chap's governor dies, or things flop the wrong way in the Street, or anything like that, you can manage something to say, or give him a good grip of the hand, or order up a drink. End of every month I can check off the families with deaths in 'em, and which of the boys have had to shut down and go to the country to economize, when my bar checks at the club come in. But you can't condole with a chap just because he is a good old ass, now can you? You can't even leave cards. Even if you could, you wouldn't know when to do it. Take Bertie, for instance. Bertie has not just become an ass; he's been an ass for years. Nobody can remember when he wasn't an ass, unless when he was a child; and nobody can tell what sort of a fellow a fellow is going to grow to be when he is a child. When I was one, when the governor entered my name at the club, Bertie had left his rah-rah days a good five years behind. And that was twenty-five years ago, for, of course, we are put down on the waiting list next thing after christening. But, as I was saying, take Bertie. If you wanted to show how right down sorry you were that he was such an old ass, when could you leave your cards? That's what I say. Would you start when he was twenty-one and leave them one each year, like on aunts and second cousins and people?

Of course, you know all that is rot. You couldn't do it. It would not be sensible. You have to show your sympathy in a more subtle way. Yet

if you were subtle, Bertie would not grasp it. For if there had been anything subtle about Bertie, the thing never would have happened at all. If it had not happened, there would be no need for sympathy. And if there were no need for sympathy there would be no need for subtlety. I don't know whether you can grasp all that. It takes a knowledge of life to see those things. You see, I am a sort of philosopher chap. Why, sometimes I sit for hours and hours in the club window, without anything to distract me, and just think and think about the complexities of life.

Bertie was all right until he met Gwen Carrington. Well, when I say all right, I don't mean that exactly. In fact, he was all wrong. But we never speak of that early affair. I figure that about all of our crowd were told of it when we were youngsters so we would be prepared to know nothing about it. I tell you, it is a jolly help to have a mater who brings you up right. Mine told me all about old Bertie's marriage the night before I set off for Groton. She said there were things a boy should understand before he went out into the world alone. I think she was a bit balmy calling boarding school the world, but the moral was sound and uplifting. I remember she was in a deep rose dinner gown, and looked ripping. The mater always had a high sense of her duty to us boys, if I do say it.

But I really think it was Uncle Ned who impressed the thing most deeply on me. It was at the Easter holidays that he took me to the theater where Mrs. Bertie was playing. Well, when I

say playing, I don't mean that exactly. In fact, she did not act at all. She was not a singer, either. That is, she may have been when she wanted to be; but clearly she did not want to be that night. She marched. Uncle Ned said it was awful. Probably he knew. Uncle Ned knew most things; and, anyway, he had seen "The Corsair" enough times to judge. She had added Bertie's good old Dutch name to the Fay Plantaganet which designated her when he first saw her. It took an extra line on the program to get it all in. Uncle Ned said it was awful.

Of course, she did that to tighten the screws on Bertie's people. Uncle Ned said she was holding out for a hundred thousand. Pretty stiff; but you see Bertie had married her, right enough. Nobody ever knew quite how it happened, Bertie least of all. I suppose she just asked him one evening, and he could not think quickly enough to name a reason why he should not. Takes a fearfully quick-witted chap to keep himself unmarried, nowadays. Soon as Bertie realized what he had done he quit her. Made long visits to relatives in the country and in the clergy, and all sorts of frightful things. Family stood by him in a most depressing manner. Bertie shilly-shallied along that way for a year or so, meekly standing for the fatted calf performance at family dinner parties even to the third and fourth generation; but never allowing a word against his absent wife. Takes an ass to pull off the uncomplaining chivalrous. Finally the Plantaganet herself gave the last turn to the screw. It all came about through a gown old Mrs. Vanderpoel had made for a dance the mater was giving, and then refused to take. Foxy dress-maker trotted it right around to Mrs. Bertie. Out came an advertisement announcing "Fay Plantaganet-Vanderpoel in the ball gown of her aristocratic mother-in-law," or some such silly line as that. And she wore it. That is, when I say she wore it, I mean she wore half of it. The waist was enough for Fay. For the rest she kept to her good old tights. And she marched.

That was when old Koster's was still in Twenty-third Street. She wore it for her third number: something about a dying soldier's message to his mother. The song did not have much to do with the costume, but it had a corking march swing in the chorus. And there never was anyone could mark time in the same class with Mrs. Bertie. And certainly there never was a "mother song" made such a hit as that.

Of course, as I said, everyone was careful to know nothing about all this, especially after the music hall scandal. The family gave up the hundred thousand just as fast as coupons could be clipped; and Fay was shipped off to some unheard-of hole. I don't recall where it was, but I'll lay a hundred it was beyond the zone where "mother songs" draw five dollars a seat. I should not repeat all this. Nobody does. Besides, everybody knows it, anyway. It has nothing to do with the story I am telling. Still, in a way, it is the key to the whole thing. I don't know whether you can grasp such a complex thought as this; everybody does not understand life as clearly as I do. But I have discovered that the situation a chap finds himself in one time has a lot of influence with the situation he finds himself in another time. Now wait a moment, and I will try to make it simpler for you. Old Bertie, you see, was a married man, and yet he was not. The agreement with Fay had been drawn up by Bertie's father, who always was referred to as "one of our most eminent lawyers," so, of course, the marching young woman got all the best of it. He ground out three thousand words of concessions on Fay's part in exchange for the hundred thousand, but forgot all about stipulating that she sue for divorce. And by the time he discovered what he had done, she had entered a demand for an additional forty-five or fifty thousand for that little favor. The old gentleman was terribly crushed. Took to his bed and never got up till the club arranged a big dinner in honor of his legal shrewdness and distinguished services to the New York Bar.

All this is only to make it clear how old Bertie stood. And he stood that way twenty years. Fay, still legally his wife, off somewhere where there were no front rows with theaters around them, and Bertie here, just going along doing everything he should. Well, when I say doing everything he should, I mean doing nothing that he should not. That was one of the really fine things about old Bertie. He never did the wrong thing, and he never even did the right thing in the wrong season. When he gave up everything for a week of spring trout, you knew it was spring. See what I mean? If you had no head for serious problems, you could just ascertain the houses Bertie dined at and feel perfectly safe in being seen at them. I have called old Bertie an ass, but in some things he was a pretty big, fine, reliable chap.

Years went by this way, twenty of them. Every December Bertie danced in the new *débutantes*; every June he ushered the season's brides to matrimony. Then Gwen Carrington came. She couldn't come before because she was not born. That is, she was not born until nineteen years before. Then there had to be plenty of time left in between for her to grow. There is a big subject for thought in how a girl changes in nineteen years, especially when she is only nineteen years old in all. But I know you do not care for thinking out these things as I do. The point is that Gwen did grow to nineteen. And a jolly pretty girl she was. I am not much at describing girls, but I'll do my best. Well, then, beginning at the top: Gwen had lovely light brown hair. That is, it was either light brown or dark. I don't remember exactly. Anyway, it was soft and thick and beautiful. Then, coming next, she had big, appealing eyes that were deucedly pretty and, for some silly old reason, sad. You'd catch her at the most unexpected times gazing vaguely ahead of her as though there was something she wanted terribly, and even she herself did not know quite what. Of course, anyone who knows Gwen Carrington knows

she had everything she could want; anyone who knows any of the Carringtons knows that. But anyway, that was the look she had when she had grown up to Bertie.

Bertie had not changed in twenty years. Of course, he did not know he was standing still for Gwen to grow up to him. Funny thing, but no chap knows what little girl, somewhere in the world, is growing up to him. Old Bertie would not have thought out a problem like that, though. I fancy he did not reason it out at all, but stayed as he was just because he was who he was. There was something finished, complete, unalterable, about old Bertie. You could not fancy anything cracking or blistering the shell-like perfection of him, or penetrating it. Nor did he appear to age while the rest of us were passing through all the stages from Noah's arks to motor cars. Possibly his mustache was a little whiter, and doubtless his hair was a bit thinner on the top. But the little mustache had such a jaunty uptwist to it, and the bald places were so deftly covered by the way his hair was brushed that you never thought of either as a sign of age. Old Bertie was like one of those courtly Velasquez Johnnies who have remained the beau ideal for each new generation that comes along.

I don't know that even I would have thought out that classy comparison but for a special pulling together I gave my brains one day for a very serious conversation with Gwen. It really is shocking how many people seem unable to look out for themselves. I detest having to take people's affairs out of their own hands, but every day I see somebody making a tangle of things that just a little insight would unravel. So what is a fellow to do? That was how it was about Gwen. For two years she had been slighting all sorts of good fellows for old Bertie. In fact, they all had given up except Ralph Stepling. He was just the kind of chap to stick to it, too. Good sort, Ralph; but no thinker. One of those fellows who work or play so

March, 1900—4

hard all day that their evenings are no good to them at all.

But you see the three of us had been pals since ever so far back. Ralph and I were just enough older than Gwen to constitute ourselves her guardians against the whole world, even as early as when we undertook to keep the ocean back from washing away her little sand houses on the old beach summer mornings. Then, as we grew older, it came more and more to be just Gwen and Ralph, with me feeling I had the two of them to look out for. But we pulled well together. As I say, old Ralph was no thinker himself, but there never was a chap who seemed to appreciate my philosophy so thoroughly. I won't go so far as to say he understood, but he always was willing to listen.

It was the summer before our last year at New Haven that we two and Gwen were dubbed the "triplets of Southampton." I remember because it was the next winter, while Ralph was sticking close to his books to try to finish decently, that Gwen was introduced in town, and met old Bertie, and everything was changed. That is, I would remember it by that but that I could not possibly forget it anyway. I never shall need any reminder of the last day of that summer. I always like to excuse myself by saying that it was their own fault for encouraging me to bury myself in my deeper thoughts. What else is a fellow to do when he is dragged along everywhere, into the woods or out to sea, with a couple of utterly absorbed young idiots who are in the first fever of love? At least, I like to think there was some such excuse for me that day when I let my mind occupy itself with metaphysical speculation upon the comparative intelligence of the jellyfish and the crab instead of on the boat I had in hand. Might have known Gwen and Ralph would be too occupied to look out for themselves. But I myself could not seem to think from the moment I saw the boom swing fiercely around and strike Gwen in the head until, somehow, I found myself making the boat fast at the landing, and

saw Ralph lift the limp body in his arms and carry her across the lawn.

Ralph seemed to understand the way I felt when they told us the doctors would not know for many hours whether she would live or not. I would rather he had blamed me, had knocked me down, than have had the miserable sick feeling inside that his silence made me suffer. But he said nothing. Nor did he say much that night when he came to my room, where I sat in darkness looking across the lawn to the window behind which the girl lay, alive or dead.

"Don't talk, old man," he said, gripping my hand. "We both understand. But don't talk."

That was all he said. He took my place by the window. And he sat there all through the long night, rigid and without a word, just watching the little square of dim light across the lawn. Some of the time I stood by the other window of my room; some of it I paced up and down in the shadows. Finally I lay across my bed in a black corner. But I did not sleep. I just gazed stupidly at the hard, firm set lines of the face silhouetted against the gray, cold sky.

I never have spoken of that night. Ralph did not want me to. You see, it was not long after that that Gwen met Bertie. Ralph was at New Haven, grinding for the homestretch, and confident about Gwen. But she met Bertie and, according to the mater, was bowled over from the start. It did not reach Ralph for a month or two. Then—would you believe it?—he cut everything and dashed to town to fight for her here. Things had stood that way over a year when I saw it was my duty to go to Gwen and put everything right. When I say things had stood that way, you understand I do not know what way they stood. Nobody did. Because, you see, the three concerned were the only ones who never talked of it.

"Gwen, old girl," I started right in; and I let her see I was serious. "Gwen, old girl," I said, "something must be done about this."

"About what?" she asked.

"You and old Bertie," I explained; "and old Ralph."

"Oh, that!" she laughed. Actually, she laughed. I undertook to explain the gravity of the situation. I pointed out that Bertie was a good sort, and that Ralph was a good sort, and I was not urging the suit of either above the other. But the serious point was that Gwen had a sister. I mentioned her. Her sister would be introduced soon. I touched, with the utmost delicacy, upon the painful position of the unmarried elder sister. I hastened to condemn the cruel inequality in the world's attitude toward the sexes. I have two younger brothers, I pointed out, both grown to manhood, yet I have not been made to suffer. But the world is very hard on women. I explained this to Gwen as gently as I could, and I think she appreciated my tact. For though she laughed a bit, doubtless from nervousness, she leaned over and patted my hand quite affectionately, and said:

"You are a dear, good boy, though."

But I would not let her put me off that way.

"You simply have got to make up your mind," I said.

She came tripping across the room like a fairy floating on air. She was all aglow; and her young laugh rippled like one of those hillside stream things in the springtime.

"I'll tell you a secret," she whispered; "I have decided."

She laughed joyously again.

"You must not tell. No one knows. Bertie and I are going to be married."

Of course, I wished her happiness. A fellow has to get such things off his mind before he can concentrate its powers on another thought. I then gave myself up to hard thinking. I knew there was some objection, but I could not seem to bring to mind just what.

"You are thinking about that other woman?" Gwen said. And then, as though correcting herself, "About his wife?"

"Yes and no," I answered. "I fancy she was what I was trying to think of."

"She is to bring suit for divorce," Gwen explained, but with no laughter in her eyes now; "desertion—he will enter no defense. He is making a— a money settlement. He is to go away, to stay till the thing blows over. Everything is arranged."

"But why should Bertie let her—"

"Oh, you don't understand," she interrupted. "You don't appreciate him."

"Don't appreciate Bertie!" I gasped. "Why, Gwen, I can't remember the time the mater, and Aunt Caroline, and all his old friends didn't hold him up to us kids as a model."

Gwen shot a hurt, resentful glance at me, as though I had said something nasty about Bertie. Imagine my going back on old Bertie! And to this sweet girl he had won, of all people!

"You don't appreciate him, you see," she went on; "his uncomplaining silence, the way he has treated the woman who was once his wife. Oh, I am so weary of the littleness of the corner of the world we live in!"

Then, with another of those sudden changes that make Gwen so inexplicable, she floated over again and drew my face toward her. Before I realized what she was doing, she had given me a resounding kiss on the forehead.

"There," she said. "You are a dear, good old lovable silly, just the same!"

Old Bertie went away, all right. There was a lot of questioning around the club, but I never let out a word. I can tell you, it was a deuced hard pull, especially when the boys came to the conclusion that Bertie had been rejected and had gone away to hide his disappointment. They had it that Ralph had won out. And certainly Gwen played about with him noon and night. Of course, I understood. And, anyway, I would have seen through Gwen's subtle trick to throw gossip off the track. But there were times when, if I had not known, I almost would have thought she had forgotten Bertie, and that her buoyant interest in Ralph was real, so lifelike was her acting.

Then, one evening, Ralph came to see me. I was dressing for dinner and a good deal put out with him for obtruding his trivial affairs on me at such a time. But I could see that he was fearfully cut up, and I simply set everything aside and gave him my whole attention. I am no saint chap, but when I see a fellow in trouble I always am willing to put my mind to it and show him the way out.

"You've known it all the time, Gwen says," he burst out, almost before he was in the room. I could see that he had lost all sense of discretion, so I sent my man away and undertook to brush my hair myself. He had just come from Gwen, and his face was set in hard lines. Actually, he was shaking.

"He's out West somewhere to let the woman divorce him; and you knew it all the time," Ralph exploded again. "But I'll tell you what it is: she is not going to marry that old mummy.

"Oh," he went on, in a moment, "I don't mean anything against Vanderpoel; he means well. But it would be damnable for a fresh, sweet girl to marry a picturesque ruin."

I simply had to give up all effort with my hair. Furthermore, I refused to hear old Bertie spoken of that way. I told Ralph so.

"He's all right," he replied, "but he ought to keep in his period. I know that you think it is because I care more for Gwen than anything else in this world, and want her for myself. And you are right. But whether I get her or whether I don't get her is a small thing compared to her happiness. That comes first. And by God I will see that she does not throw it away through romantic nonsense."

He even would not take a cigarette. There was nothing for me to do but simply listen.

"She has some sentimental notion about his chivalry, his martyrdom. She has just lost her point of view, that's all."

He paused in his tirade, evidently for lack of words. Then, suddenly, he brought his fist down on the dressing

table with a crash that rattled everything fearfully.

"Why," he cried, "I would rather see her married to you, even!"

I could not sleep that night. No, nor for nights and nights after. That is, not more than five or six hours a night. I was fearfully upset, I was confused, too, as to how I could make them all happy, and without marrying Gwen myself. Of course, I am very fond of Gwen; I would do anything for her. I would marry her any time she asked me, if it was the only way. But really I would rather not. I have other plans.

But that is neither here nor there. Every night before I got to sleep and every morning after my man had called me, I would lie awake pondering on how I could straighten the whole thing out. I did not mention Ralph's astounding proposition to Gwen. Nor, do you know, did he ever speak of it again, any more than if he had forgotten all about it. But how was I to judge between the two good old chaps which would make the girl the happier? I wondered if, at last, I had come face to face with a problem I could not master. I could not warn Bertie about Ralph's apparent headway, nor could I work secretly for Bertie against old Ralph. For I believe there is such a thing as honor even among friends. Then, just when the problem seemed to have the upper hand, it all came clear to me. Like a flash, mind you. You cannot explain mental phenomena, you know. I suppose some fellows simply are born with minds that see. It came to me just as clear as day, one morning while my man was running my bath, that my duty was to do nothing, simply let things take their course.

I followed my higher judgment. I did nothing. And now just see how wonderfully life shapes itself. A letter came from Bertie! I had not written a line, mind you. He told me all about his life on the ranch. You would not have thought it was Bertie. Believe me, the clothes he told of wearing out there, the great, clumsy boots, the corduroy trousers, the rough woolen

shirts, were fearful. Said he was mailing a photograph of himself. I had received the larger envelope in his handwriting. His letter went on to say that he liked the life, that he was growing fat and fairly rosy on it. Then there were some words crossed out.

Then he came to the real purpose of the letter. Some people are less keen than I about such things; I always say that when a body writes a letter there is some motive, something back of it. Old Bertie, being the most unsubtle chap, came right out and said he had a reason for writing to me. The divorce was assured, he said. But he had not heard from Gwen for two weeks. Probably her letters had been delayed; or perhaps she was too engrossed with the gaieties of the new season in town. But would I, as a stanch friend of both, look about and reassure him? I might quote parts of his letter to Gwen, he suggested; or give it all to her to read.

There you are! Think of a chap with Bertie's manner, his finish, being tactless enough to suggest my showing a letter about cattle and woolen shirts and things to a nice girl like Gwen. And written on ruled pad-paper it was, too.

But I wouldn't leave a friend in the lurch at such a time, just because he was an old ass. I put all my mind to it. I went to the club and dined alone so as to lay out my plan of action in every detail. When every move was arranged, I hailed a taxicab and went straight to the Opera House. I knew Gwen had been looking forward to the new Debussy thing for weeks—that she surely would be there. Evidently Ralph knew it, too, for I found him wandering rather aimlessly around the lobby when I arrived.

I went directly to the Carringtons' box. Upon my word, I hardly was civil to the old folks. I slipped to a seat just behind Gwen. I had planned every detail. I did not so much as mention Bertie. But when she had returned her attention to the stage, I brought the envelope with the photograph from my pocket. Without a

word, I slipped it gently to Gwen's lap. She glanced down.

"For me?" she whispered.

"Yes," I answered. "Open it."

She broke the seal. She slipped out the photograph. It seemed like many minutes that she simply sat and gazed at it. Then without a murmur she let it slip to her lap, and stared blankly at the stage. I looked across her white, soft, young shoulder at the photograph.

I suppose it was old Bertie. I had been prepared for the rough, ungainly, dirty clothes. Even in a vague way, I had expected to see the tapering, graceful figure expanded; but I hardly had expected to see a woolen-shirted stomach bagging over a cartridge belt. But it was the face that completely startled me. It was an old man that looked out from the picture; not our ageless, courtly Bertie, but a commonplace, hearty, smirking old man. In place of the jaunty little mustache was an uneven, unkempt beard, quite white. And above it, through occasional tufts of unbrushed hair, a shiny scalp glistened in the glaring sunlight.

Gwen was still gazing vacantly ahead of her. The lack of words was growing painful. I felt I must come to the rescue. Seems to me it always is I who saves the situation.

"Old Bertie," I said, in a bright, buoyant tone, "old Bertie looks ruddy and healthy, eh, what?"

There was a moment's pause, and then, without warning, Gwen threw back her head and shrieked with laughter. It was fearful. People all about us turned to look. I seized her by the arm and drew her into the shadow. I told the others to keep their places in the front of the box to avoid conspicuousness.

In a moment Ralph burst in. I fancy he had been watching her from below. Gwen stopped laughing. She looked almost uncomprehendingly at Ralph. Then tears came in her eyes.

"I've been such a fool," she cried; "such a fool!" And she dropped forward into old Ralph's arms.

THE PREVAILER

By F. K. TRASK

THERE was joy and anticipation in the breathless crowd that swept into the North Union station on the eve of Thanksgiving, and naught but cheer among the home-goers who filled the Green Mountain Flyer standing on the west tracks.

"All aboard!" was quietly spoken, the gate clanged at the word, each passenger settled back with a sigh of satisfaction, but the train did not start.

In the dining car all was happy confusion, grinning darkies ran to and fro, orders were shouted and laughing greetings exchanged, but without, a hush as of great portent, a sudden stillness accentuated by far-away sounds that were but parts of the silence, settled over the vast building.

Minute after minute passed and again the clang of the gate and echoing footsteps. Then through the encompassing silence came the porter with a great English hunting bag, and, in long winter coats, the young president of the Fitchburg and the tall form of that clear-headed, open-hearted cosmopolite, well known to the Hunt at Medfield as the owner of Blasé—Blasé, fast, sure, tireless thoroughbred, the pride of the club.

"I know but little, Walker," said the president earnestly. "It seems incredible to us that Miss Wrightington should be thrown from her own horse on an open road in broad daylight and that, with her splendid vitality, she should be dying! We sent up a special for Dr. Elliot's assistant this morning, but you will make better time tonight. I was able to get an Arms car for Blasé. It should be cut out at the siding by one o'clock and then you've

fifteen miles to Beaver Creek, but the old horse will carry you. He and the groom have been on board for an hour. Go, man; we're all with you—all with you."

He pushed Walker, who moved with the calm of one in a trance, through the vestibule doors and called to the engineer, "Go on, Brown! Run extra! You have the track!" Then silently the long train moved slowly and carefully across the yard switches, the long bridges over the Charles, and out into the night.

In the first sleeper Walker sat motionless by the window. With a sense of utter detachment he seemed to be gazing at his Wall Street office, and to see himself, the junior, standing with his partners in the streaming sunlight. He heard them ask, with their eyes on his kit bag, if he were going home for Thanksgiving. He heard his own reply that he was going to Charlie Head and if there was no frost would ride Gloucester at Richmond County the next day. He saw himself open the telegram handed to him and read again the message—"Nancy thrown—dying from shock. Can you come? Elsie." He knew that he had telegraphed Boston commanding aid to reach Beaver Creek; that he had caught the one o'clock limited from New York, and was rushing north, with a thoroughbred in the stable car ahead. That was all. Dully he realized that the train had passed Waltham. He saw the links at Kendal Green swim in the moonlight; then, as with gathered speed they rushed under Baker's Bridge, he heard the fierce call of the locomotive, and a

moment later the warned station men at Concord caught their breath as the Flyer, running sixty miles an hour, swept round the curve and out over the trestles, calling, calling, calling into the dark.

Oblivious of his surroundings Walker sat, his face gray and set as if carved from New England granite, conscious only of a fierce mental power and awful fixity, stronger than the death with which he wrestled. Unswervingly the man's heart clung to its purpose, the cry of the great prevailer, "I will not let thee go!"

The night wore on in the sick room of the old farm house at Beaver Creek. Under the long, low rafters, the shaded lamp's light caught back a glow from deep-grained mahogany, and a gleam from brass knobs and drop handles, which told that the homestead had come to those who, with the power, had the love to recreate its simple dignity and colonial splendor.

On her bed in the center of the room lay Nancy Wrightington, her chiseled, white, immovable face framed in the gorgeous black of her hair. On a horsehair sofa, in a sleep of exhaustion, lay Mrs. Wrightington. By the bed was the swift, silent, ministering nurse, while from the foot Elsie watched, with an intensity of attitude which depicted her fierce clinging to hope in the struggle of youth with death.

Two days before, this sterling horse-woman, splendid golfer, the light and soul of every house party, had been thrown or fallen from her horse, and was found unconscious but almost uninjured, yet from the shock her vitality had never rallied, though every stimulant known to science had been tried. Slowly the truth was forced upon doctor and nurses. The case was hopeless; Nancy Wrightington was dying.

The previous morning Elsie, unknown to those about her, had sent an appeal to a man whom she barely knew, and whose name had not passed her sister's lips for many months. All others, bowing to the inevitable, had silently

awaited the end. It was the passing of a tired spirit, rather than physical death, for which they watched and waited, until at one o'clock in the afternoon, seemingly the moment of dissolution, came an intangible change and the patient had fallen into the set calm in which, insensible to all about her, hour after hour she had since lain.

It was two hours after midnight when the great surgeon softly entered and stopped amazed. The nurse was leaning forward in intense expectation, for the sick woman's eyes were open, and her expression, although dead to all about her, was that of one listening. It was no mystic harkening for sounds unheard by mortal ears, yet the intensity of the face held the watchers spellbound, until their nerves felt a dim beating caused by no "death watch" in the wall.

Noiselessly Elsie drew back the heavy curtains of the window and looked out over the splendor of the winter night. Before her in incomparable quiet the open fields, framed in dark pines, stretched out acre upon acre, wrapped in white frost. Above, the stars, against deep velvet, gleamed and glittered in the still cold of Thanksgiving. The naked soul of Nature lay before her; the pride of New England; strong in the power of the harvest past, strong in the promise of harvests to come; while in all, through all, and above all breathed "the peace which passeth all understanding," and somewhere, miles out over the frozen roadway, a horse was galloping, galloping hard.

There was no mad rush of fright in the deep cadence of the hoofbeats. As minute after minute passed, clear and firm they came, now deadened by the woods of the long hollow, now ringing out on the open, but always nearer and nearer until, on a sudden, echo took up the wooden bridge's vibration to the sharp beat of the trot. Then, as the rider's hands dropped, again came the long pulse of the gallop, and unerringly the watchers knew that with each rhythmic stroke a power far beyond their comprehension was sweep-

ing to them through the hush of the solemn night. A sudden lamp gleamed below, and through the band of light the figures surged. In that instant the doctor caught the motionless ease of the rider, but Elsie grasped the power of the stride, a stretched neck, and the long swing of a low carried head, and "Blasé!" burst from her lips in a pregnant whisper—"old Blasé!" as she vanished from the room.

In the waiting moments fraught with portent, Mrs. Wrightington standing erect, motionless, it was the doctor who, swept from his science, yet raised his hand for silence. But the patient's eyes were fixed on the doorway with no shadow behind them, and there for an instant paused a figure in full hunting costume, and Walker's voice was tense with the call of life as he knelt by the bedside: "Nancy! Nancy! Oh, Almighty God!"

The stars were just dimming with the first far suggestion of dawn, when Dr. Elliot whispered to himself with a quiet smile: "Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and

hast prevailed," as he marked the powerful, silent figure with folded arms, standing at the library window. But his voice was all cheer as he raised it: "Come, Mr. Walker, Nancy—Miss Wrightington—is sleeping like a baby; nature will do the rest. But you are a different proposition. My boy has broiled a steak and dug up a bottle of Irroy '80, and we'll have supper, by your leave, old fellow, before you turn in."

So it happened that when Mrs. Norton forced her way through in the early Thanksgiving morning, the house was wrapped in the winter sunlight, and the maids were moving silently, with finger to lip, but their faces were bright; and down in a roomy box stall Elsie was sobbing out her thanksgiving on the neck of a heavily blanketed and carefully bandaged thoroughbred, who gazed over her shoulder with an expression which stamped him forever as "Old Blasé." Only the doctor realized that he had caught one glimpse of the Infinite, where science had no part.



ROSA ROSAE

By FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS

I KNEW two roses; red and white were they,
And both were born beside the imperial sea.
One bowed beneath the kisses of the spray,
The other bloomed in fair virginity—
A flower and a woman.

And one day
The woman plucked the flower, and thoughtfully
Pressed it within her bosom, where it lay,
A warm blush on a cold divinity.

And still my placid Rose is standing there,
—A Peri at the gate of Paradise—

Faint tropic odors in her banded hair
And ever a silent glory in her eyes;

And I, who love my roses, in despair
See how one dreams the while the other dies.

Yet could I welcome death to find it where
My red rose in that fragrant chalice lies.

A PAYING ADVERTISEMENT

By ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL

"MY lost youth!" lamented Laura Tiffany sadly. She sipped her tea in a gentle, hopeless way. To an onlooker she was dainty and sweet in the extreme, with nothing missing. Her hostess laughed unsympathetically.

"What you need is another cup of tea, my dear. Fred, bring me her cup. Cheer up, there may be a stranger in it."

"It will be my lost youth, then." Laura smiled in the same delicate, cheerless fashion. "There could be no greater stranger to me. I haven't seen it for—oh, years!"

"Fred, will you listen? You'd think she was a hundred!" laughed the plump little person behind the teapot, herself scarcely Laura Tiffany's junior. "Land knows I haven't lost anything but my cook, and Fred's going to advertise for another—Laura, just the thing! Advertise for your lost youth! Get Fred to do it in his paper. Sit down beside her, Freddy, and talk it up."

Freddy was comfortably stout and looked at life with proportionate cheerfulness. He let himself down beside Laura with the solid appreciation of a stout man for a good seat.

"Why not?" he said briskly. "Good idea of Molly's. Advertising pays. If you want to buy anything or sell anything—advertise; have lost or found anything—advertise, my dear woman, advertise! In the *Daily Events*—five cents per! I shall be happy to undertake any little commission." He laughed comfortably.

"It certainly sounds like a bargain—one's lost youth restored for a little

matter of five cents!" Laura smiled over her teacup. "Just when I'd given it up, too, for good and all. Dear, dear, don't think I'm always a whimperer, Freddy. It's Alsatia—she's to blame today. I might have been able to dissemble a little longer. Lay it to Alsatia."

"Alsatia?"

"My new maid—yes. I named her myself. I believe her 'born name' is Emma or Etta or something of that sort. She reminded me at once of the 'blue Alsatian mountains,' hence the name Alsatia."

"Why blue Alsatian mountains?" inquired Freddy thoughtfully.

"Because of her size and blueness. Alsatia possesses both attributes. I started to say she was responsible for my being in special mourning today. She sat down suddenly in the middle of doing my hair and began to cry. All I could get out of her was: 'Thirty, mum! It's so tarrible to be thirty!' I am forty, myself," added Laura sadly.

"Is it so 'tarrible' to be forty?" laughed the plump man who should have known from experience. "Then better take my advice and let me advertise for you."

"Lost: My pet youth, somewhere between here and Used to Be. Finder will be suitably rewarded on returning the same to Laura Tiffany, Orchard Street."

"How does that sound?"

"No questions asked," appended Freddy seriously. "That brings 'em quicker. There's Molly blinking this way—me for Molly! When she blinks, something is always doing." He rose with reluctance and moved ponder-

ously away. "I won't send in my bill till you get satisfactory returns—returns guaranteed," he called back over his shoulder. A smart little person in a tailored gown tripped across to Laura and took the place just vacated beside her.

"Do tell some news, Miss Tiffany! Everybody else is a positive blank. I can't find out a thing except that Henry Somebody's returned from somewhere! If you can't do better than that—"

"I can't even do that. I didn't know Henry had returned," smiled Laura pensively. "When did it happen?"

The smart little person stirred her tea with a soft clatter; her tinkling voice made a musical accompaniment.

"As if I knew! He's discovered a mountain, or an ocean, or something like that, and brought it home with him, as far as I can make out. I haven't seen you for an age, Miss Tiffany; have you been discovering things, too?"

"Yes," nodded Laura; "worse than oceans and mountains! I've been discovering that I'm growing old."

The smart little person was young. She wrinkled her brows humorously; her eyes said triumphant things about the joys of youth to Laura Tiffany.

"Shocking!" uttered her glib tongue as she floated away to a beckoning friend. Laura watched her with plaintive gaze. She herself felt suddenly tired and out of tune with the gay little company. She would go home to her "blue Alsatian mountain" and be put to bed.

The following day Laura breakfasted in bed. It was in accordance with her new role of being old; she might well take advantage of all the perquisites. Alsatia came fleshily upstairs with a tray. "Oh, mum," she sighed as she came into the pleasant room, "if I didn't a'most sit down on the landin' and cry!"

Laura turned her sweet face on the pillow and faintly smiled.

"The same old trouble, Alsatia? Thirty again?"

"No—oh, no, mum! I hope as I've got above that." Alsatia set down her tray with a melancholy thump and proceeded to rearrange the dishes. "But it come over me sudden, comin' up, how tarrible it is to be in love."

Laura lifted her head and gazed sternly at the maid. "Alsatia! And you've only been with me three weeks! That was the matter with my last one—it is cruelty to mistresses! I ought to have *leased* you—for a term of years."

"Oh, I ain't it yet—I'm only gettin' ready to be, an' it kind of scares me. I made up my mind that here I was thirty an' it'd got to be now or never." At the door Alsatia turned. The glance she sent over her capacious shoulder to the woman on the pillows was a compassionate one.

"I suppose as you've got past bein'," Alsatia said upwardly.

Laura Tiffany laughed softly to herself behind her plates and cups. Past being in love? So far "past" that the dust of ages lay thick on her youthful little romances. "I shouldn't know them by sight if I dusted them," she sighed. "I suppose my memory is failing. There was Dick and there was Harry, but if I dusted Dick he might be Harry! Which one was it used to call me Lollie?" She laughed again in a mirthless, lonely little way. Age sat heavily on her this morning.

"There, there, there, Lollie, drink your coffee and ring for Alsatia to bring up the paper. You'll forget your own troubles in other people's tragedies." She tinkled a little bell.

"The morning paper, Alsatia. You forgot to bring it up."

"I got it right here, mum. There's a tarrible murder on the first page—Lor! Lor! think o' bein' murdered! If I had been once I never'd want to be again." Alsatia's ready tears flowed. "It would kill me, mum!" she sobbed.

The paper creaked cheerfully as Laura spread it out. She read it page by page conscientiously. "Even the 'begats' today," she reflected, thinking of old childish scriptural stunts; "I need all I can get— Why?"

Laura Tiffany sat up straight in her bed.

"Why!" she ejaculated again under her breath. Her eyes, fastened to the advertising pages of the *Daily Events*, widened with astonishment. She read again.

WANTED: My lost youth. The finder will be liberally rewarded by returning the same to me at 104 Orchard Street and no questions asked.

It was Freddy Blair's work! He had remembered their foolish little talk; it was like Freddy to remember. She ought to have known he never missed a chance to play a joke on anyone. It was abominable!—ridiculous! Laura's clear laugh suddenly filled the room. That was just it—ridiculous!

She pushed aside tray and newspaper and swung her white feet to the floor. The laugh bubbling out anew in spasmodic little gushes, she dressed herself quickly and unassisted. Alsatia was not the one to call upon now, if she wished to persist in cheerfulness.

"I must be up and dressed," Laura said, piling her soft hair with deft hands. "It will never do for my lost youth to find me napping! And I must tell Alsatia—" She swung about and touched her bell. The maid's steps sounded heavily on the stairs.

"Alsatia, if anyone comes to—to bring back anything of mine that was lost, be sure to call me. It will need to be—I shall have to identify it." For one would not want, however much in need, to have anyone else's youth!

Laura, oddly exhilarated and cheerful, descended to her sitting room. A fantastic fancy seized her to sit by the window and watch every passer, to discover the coming of the right one. She got out a lot of soft embroideries and established herself in a comfortable chair.

The first passer was a woman with a little child. The child stepped along springily—laughing and dancing. Laura's fancy took another leap. The little child—was the woman bringing the little child in answer to the advertisement?

"Not so far back as that!" cried

Laura in pretense of dismay. Yet, why not? It would be good to feel like springing, dancing along, in someone's safe clutch—to begin again at the beginning.

"And this time," Laura laughed out unthinkingly, "I will remember which is Harry and which is Dick!" She fell into sudden dreaming, while the dainty work dropped in a white billow at her feet. The sharp trill of the door bell roused her as from sleep. Alsatia came bulkily into the room a moment later.

"A gentleman, mum. He didn't send any name, but said as he'd called to return something—"

"Of course—I know!" Laura sprang to her feet. Instinctively her hands went up to the soft piles of her hair, then smoothed her skirts tidily. At the door she caught the maid's arm with a little laugh. "Supposing it isn't mine—supposing it's the *wrong one*, Alsatia! Alsatia, why don't you wish me good luck?"

The gentleman was on his feet; he turned at her coming. Laura's first impression was of a young man, but her second glance revealed gray hairs, with a certain middle-aged hint of stoutness.

They exchanged grave bows, but Laura's eyes were dancing. She resisted an impulse to demand his bundle—what had he done with that?

"This is 104 Orchard Street?"

She bowed and waited. The man's face reminded her hauntingly of some other, but what other face? It was at any rate a good face.

"I saw your advertisement in the paper—this morning's paper—and came at once. I do not wish to keep what does not belong to me."

"No—will you not sit down?" Laura asked politely. She had a feeling that they were chief actors—she and this solemn-eyed man—in a preposterous farce and the need of playing her part well claimed her for the time.

"You are, I suppose, prepared to identify your—er—lost property?" the other chief player was saying

gravely. Laura was struck with sudden misgivings. Stage fright so soon?

"No—yes—how can I tell?" she stammered. "I lost it so long ago! Still, I think if you will describe—no, I ought to describe, I suppose—"

He nodded, but took pity.

"Allow me to assist your memory." He bowed elaborately. "Did you lose it on top of a mountain—or, I might say, a range of mountains? The one I was fortunate enough to find was there in the snow."

Laura's face fell.

"Dear, no!—Then it can't be mine! I never was on a range of mountains. It is just as well you did not bring it with you."

"But I did!" Now the other actor was smiling. "I have it with me, ready to relinquish it if you offer sufficient proofs. Though I must confess, madam, I shall be only too relieved if you cannot. You see, I have been—er—wearing it as my own since I found it. It has fitted admirably, but when I read your notice of loss I was suddenly fearful that it might be yours."

Laura's lips trembled with eagerness to smile, but she kept them grave.

"I can tell better if I see it—I will ring for my maid to bring the bundle. You left it with your hat in the hall, I am to understand?"

He was equally grave.

"No," he said quietly, "I have it on. It is most comfortable—I am glad the prospect is that I need not take it off. Yet believe me, madam, if it were to fit—I would willingly sacrifice—Laura, don't you remember a fellow?"

"Henry Lansing! Of course, it's been you all the time!" Laura's hand went out joyously.

"Make it Harry and I'll call you Lollie—is it a bargain?"

So it was Harry who had called her Lollie! Perhaps, after all, if she had persisted in dusting him she would have found out.

"You are the Henry Somebody, then, who has discovered a mountain? Of course—of course. Why didn't I know? And it was on your mountain you found my—your—lost youth?"

You ought to have known it couldn't be mine unless I 'discovered.' Tell me about finding it."

"Easiest thing in the world!" He had drawn his chair a little nearer and settled into comfortable sociability. Of course—now it was plain enough to see that he was Harry! Laura's pleased eyes dwelt on his vigorous, clean-cut features and general air of youthfulness. Plain enough, too, that he *had it on*—of course.

"I picked it up, that's all. Nothing simpler! You see"—Harry had always been saying "You see"—"I found myself growing old one day, Lollie. It plumb scared me. I wasn't ready."

"Nobody ever is—I wasn't. I was scared."

"Well, all you had to do was to go to climbing mountains and doing other boy stunts."

"Girl stunts," she corrected gently. He nodded.

"You'd be astonished! First thing you know you'd be picking your youth up out of the snow and off you'd go with it on again. Bles't if I didn't! Nobody calls me an old fellow now with impunity! Try it, Lollie—try it."

She shook her head.

"Too late. Tell me some more. How did you know it was my advertisement? It wasn't! It was Freddy Blair's."

"I scented Freddy. Dropped in to see him and incidentally found my cue. I was going to hunt you up today—Laura. As if I wouldn't!"

"I'd never have forgiven you," she smiled. "But it's what Alsatia would call a 'tarrible' disappointment not to find you've brought my poor lost youth. I was expecting it!"

This call of Laura's was repeated many times in the succeeding weeks. She got to expecting them as she had expected her youth to come back. She was always ready with her gracious, gentle welcome. Her sweet face began to take on a peculiar alertness and charm like the face of a girl.

"Lollie"—it was at the close of one of the later calls, and he was holding both her delicate white hands in his big,

brown grasp—"I found it for you, after all, Lollie," he said; "you have it on this minute!"

She looked up from her small stature to his great one. Her eyes were softly shining.

"Does it—fit?" she asked anxiously. "Harry, why don't you say it is becoming to me?"

That he said it satisfactorily was to be inferred from the length of time she sat

in a gentle trance after he went away. The daylight faded and she sat on in a darkness that to Laura was like a clear shining. Alsatia coming in to light the gas found her there.

"Lor! Lor!" murmured the big maid in wonderment at the sight of her mistress's face. Laura turned it, smiling, to the light.

"Alsatia," she said gently, "it isn't 'tarrible' at all!"



EMPERY

By ALDIS DUNBAR

"IF I ask no guerdon,
Who shall say me nay?"
This my rondel's burden,
As I go my way.

Singing so, I master
This wild heart of mine,
Lest it leap the faster
At some word of thine.

Whoso gives—is royal,
Who entreats—a thrall.
To my birthright loyal
Count me. That is all.

Though I labor, serving,
At your wayward will,
Yet my heart, unswerving,
Holds that lordship still,

Echoing the burden,
Bravely, night and day:
"If I ask no guerdon,
None can say me nay!"

THE LOBSTER AND THE ANGEL

By LEO CRANE

WERE it not for the facts that Marcia was devoted to the succulent broiled lobster, and that Henri worshiped at the shrine of the equally succulent spaghetti, and that Alphonse idolized an imported Weissenger sausage which surpasses either of these things in point of succulence, this story might seem prosaic. And as a certain stipulated amount of coin of the realm is necessary to guarantee the supply of these delicacies, Marcia and Henri and Alphonse had been deprived of them for quite a space. Existence without them, however, was not enjoyable. Life was dull in absence of them and the days were filled with much gloom. But worse than this—though they had foregone such tempting bits for long—the matter of vulgar substitutes had also become perplexing. Marcia and Henri and Alphonse had come to the point where they were no longer fastidious in the matter of lobster, spaghetti or mere sausage. They must eat—something! The noninteresting but filling stew had an importance that could not be denied. Henri and Alphonse had postponed this grave situation somewhat by purchasing small beers at places noted for a bountiful free lunch, much of which they had smuggled out for Marcia. Then, as the finances grew tighter, Henri had been deputized to smuggle for two, since one can go oftener when there is but one beer to be purchased. Finally and now the purse was empty. But still clamored their stomachs three for food. They must eat!

It was trying. To mention lobster before Marcia invited tears, which were

affecting; to name spaghetti within the hearing of Henri forced one to listen to vehement and highly colored language; and speech concerning sausage of whatever importation licensed Alphonse to slaughter.

The three had long been comrades. They had met at a time when the Toreador Opera Company had crossed the great divide in Frederick, Maryland (meaning that it had ceased to exist) and these three had started to walk to Baltimore. But that was in the long ago. Since, they had endured privations like unto that which harrows the soul, but never in their common history had they been so up against it as now in New York in winter.

Blithely had they seen opera companies arise out of nothing, bloom and go to seed, and blithely would they, indeed. But it seemed that opera of their class would arise no more for inspection, the choruses of the once despised musical comedies were filled to overflowing in more ways than one, and it was winter in New York, with Marcia, Henri and Alphonse up against it. They were without lobster, spaghetti, sausage; they were without beer money; moreover, they were hungry. Art could no longer be considered as a worthy divinity. The grosser features of the cheap table d'hôte compelled their interest. And with the snow leaking in at one's shoe-soles, one is apt to consider a job of any sort. Henri and Alphonse mournfully ventured forth, not to consider, but to seek, anywhere, anything.

At the corner they held a short, rapid conversation, their faces evidencing all the depression that was within them.

"Ah, *misérable!* What can we do?—Ees not all exhaust?" asked Henri.

"Not ees all hope yet gone," replied Alphonse in a cheerless voice. He seemed to be reviewing a very unpleasant subject. "Art no long' ees kind to eets children. . . ." He finally blurted out: "Let us confess ozer talents. Before you become ze one gran' tenor, Henri, what is eet you were, eh?"

This was a direct and personal lead. Henri shuffled his feet, shrugged his shoulders and quivered. The first emotion had opened a fresh crack in his shoes; the second had made a funnel of his upturned coat collar. Through both entrances sifted the snow. The shiver probably betrayed a convulsion of his artistic soul, which refused to review his revolting past.

"Confess!" obdurately demanded Alphonse, his chubby face becoming as stern as puffed cheeks and a ridiculously molded chin would allow.

"I was ze barber," shamefully admitted Henri.

"Ah! Ha-a-a!" cried Alphonse triumphantly. "Now, you shall seek ze place where ze barb' ees most require."

"I will die first!" hollowly echoed Henri, lifting his slender hands to heaven with the correct and sublime motion of the chorus.

"Zere ees Marcia," urged Alphonse.

"Eet is not my nature—eet ees not ze nature of ze true artiste to sacrifice honor for love," exclaimed Henri with vehemence, striking himself passionately in the chest with his clenched fists, and immediately regretting the emotion in a fit of coughing.

"Zen behold!" cried Alphonse. "I, too, loafe Marcia, an' I will sacrifice. Before Art I was a singer even. A singer! I sang at ze Café Français. Behold! I go. . . ."

Alphonse started at a mad gait up the street, with Henri following. Henri was penitent, but also determined not to caress a razor again. The sight of one had become loathsome to him. The necessity of shaving himself daily was misery enough. He tried to explain this to Alphonse, but that chubby-

faced tenor would not listen. Frequently, with a gesture that would have been grand had it not been fat, he turned and cried, "Behold!" Abraham on the path to sacrifice had not been more tragically pathetic.

Finally, reaching the low portal of the Café Français, Alphonse executed one last, eloquent gesture and disappeared inside. Henri awaited his return to the street. Fifteen minutes passed. Henri paced up and down in the cold. The door was opened once by a well-fed red-nosed gentleman coming out, and the odor of edible things, well cooked and hot, came out to Henri with him. Henri shivered, both his stomach and his back. He felt as though the other gentleman had ill-treated him.

Then, as with a burst of triumph, radiant and effusive, came Alphonse forth again.

"La! La! La-la-la!" he cried, snapping his fat fingers, "I hav' ze job." Henri beamed on him with all the pride of an elder brother.

"So glad was he to hav' me once again! Behold! He pays me advance." And Alphonse jingled the money. It had a delicious, wholesome sound, promising much comfort. Immediately Henri became eager. He knew of a place, just around the corner, where—but Alphonse motioned him disdainfully to undeceive himself of such a sordid idea.

"When ze gran' artiste will not work ze gran' artiste will not eat," he announced. "I do not sacrifice—me, ze gran' tenor, do not sacrifice for you, monsieur. Eet ees for loafe of Marcia. As for you . . . Bah! Bah!"

He had snapped his fat fingers in Henri's face. Henri stared at him and groaned at the infidelity of mankind, and particularly tenors.

"Wait!" said Alphonse, seeming to relent. "Ze propriétaire, he ees a fren' of mine. I speak for you, Henri. Zere ees already tenori a-plenty, but"—and he hoarsely whispered—"zere may be a place for ze waitaire . . ."

"*Sacré!*" groaned Henri.

"Eet may not be for long, Monsieur

Artiste," suggested Alphonse. "When ze opera requires, zen à bas ze café."

"*Mel* . . . I could not zee Marcia in ze face!" lamented Henri, wiping tears from his eyes.

But Alphonse held up an intriguing finger.

"Ha! I hav' ze gran' plan," he said impressively, a cunning leer settling upon his lips. "She shall not know all! She shall think zat we are engage by ze great composer in ze studio. When we are at ze café, zen we are at ze studio. . . ."

Henri stared at him for a full minute. Then, seizing the arm of Alphonse, he dragged him toward the café again.

"Speak for me, I implore," he begged emotionally.

So they went inside the place of sacrifice together.

Thus it came about that Alphonse, who had been prevented by the mere quips of fortune from giving Caruso points on the higher register, now posed as a troubadour at the piano of the Café Français. Alphonse, though he despised his mountebank's position, believed that he should lend Art to his every occupation, no matter how far removed from that humble sphere Art might be, so he adopted a gravity of mien that would have been comical had it not been astounding in a troubadour. But his figure and general make-up did not blend well with this austerity. The guitar held at a graceful angle, his mustache twisted somewhat fiercely over bulging cheeks that even poverty had not depleted, his chest inflated and head thrown far back to allow for correct tone making, the effect was one of a prancing frog. Alphonse strutted and bellowed like a good fellow to earn his salary, for the cold and the hunger had put the fear into him. At odd times he thanked God fervently that the Café Français was far distant from that quarter of town in which his compatriots of the Muse sought their succulent spaghetti. To be a troubadour in the Café Français was bad enough; but to be recognized in such

an occupation—he, Alphonse, the great, the grand tenor! Oh, *miserable!*

However, New York is a vast city, and it is only Newspaper Row that touches every part of it. Alphonse felt himself safe.

And also it came about that another, one who resembled an awning pole in both height and girth, and who was of a funereal sadness in the face, came to the Café Français for other duties. He went sadly, silently, almost apologetically about, harkening to the call of "*Garçon!*" And he carried much food to people who seemed to need it, so anxious were they for it. Long training with razors aided him wonderfully, though, when the end of meals came, that inevitable *finis* bringing the anxious interlude between the tip and its reception. Even the most lavish of these, however, could not entirely dispel his pessimism, and he groaned every time he passed Alphonse, whereupon that famous tenor would roll up his eyes and cut loose another note of even greater magnitude than the last preceding. When business was slack at the café, Alphonse would retire to a little room under the stairs, where he gargled his throat and whimpered over his shredded voice. Whenever Henri joined him they bemoaned their common fate.

But they knew that Marcia, who was still without an engagement, gave them due credit for their wearing work at the studio. They had not sacrificed themselves in an altogether useless or unworthy cause, and though they were rivals for her love, neither saw any occasion for hating each other. The story they had framed up about the great composer who required soloists to test his compositions worked like a charm with Marcia. She was not inquisitive. She believed every word of it, and she would caution them not to overwork, calling them her poor boys and promising her every favor when the rich angel would come along to make her a prima donna.

Despite her belief, they trembled for fear she would discover their loathsome tasks.

"Suppose she suspects . . . and follows us!" suggested Henri.

Alphonse moaned and dreaded the beginning of his daily program.

"Eet would be terrible," he said. "We must be on ze *qui vive* always. We will go different ways, eh? Yes." So they became as a pair of criminals, wearying themselves with methods of self-protection. They sought out different and bewildering routes to the café doors, and they returned home by yet other routes, tortuous in the extreme. Several times they lost themselves and had to get a policeman's directions, which are not always the best. But they believed themselves secure. Marcia was worth it, and some day she would make decision between them. It was the firm purpose of each one that should he prove to be the unsuccessful aspirant, he would immediately end his existence by a most horrible method (not altogether selected), but neither of them confessed this plot to the other, nor to Marcia.

She was a petite woman, with red lips and a brilliant smile, and, unlike Henri and Alphonse, she wasted little thought on being a grand artist, and by that means arrived closer to the desired effect than either of them. There was nothing of the doleful temperament about Marcia. All she longed for was peace of mind, including a lobster at odd times.

Now neither Henri's labor nor Alphonse's singing produced salary enough to provide all the delicacies of the season, not to speak of lobster out of it, and so Marcia decided to divorce herself from Art in order to secure the alimony of more practical labor. Without divulging her schemes to anyone, and certainly not to Henri or Alphonse, she sought, applied for and finally secured a place in a line of maidens whose duty it was to smile, chatter in pantomime and joyously trip across the village green, heralding with staccato acclamation the approach of anything and anybody big enough to have a real name in the cast of a musical comedy. She argued that if Frederick, Maryland, had been able to stand for her one night

trills in "Carmen," with Henri as Escamillo and the rotund Alphonse as Don José, New York ought not to feel imposed upon when she sang—"Fa, la, la, the wedding bells do ring!" It was silly, but it brought home the stipulated price of necessities, and—hush! the possibility of securing that prince of indigestion, the crimson lobster, delicious, delectable, desired.

Also, she made a discovery. The comedian who occupied the stage with and without the chorus had little to teach Alphonse in the art of being ludicrous, and a doleful gentleman who reaped all the trouble of the play was Henri to the life. Marcia began to realize that both Alphonse and Henri had missed their vocations. They should not have sought to be vocal stars attacking the seventh heaven of the Muse, when they were at all times comedians without effort; and she believed that no sooner did they recognize this than the world would recognize them. This gave Marcia food for much thought. She wondered how she might break this discovery to them without Alphonse's wrath and Henri's rage descending upon her in a homicidal manner.

Fate arranged the thing for her. Fate, if left alone and not annoyed by criticism, is a willing worker.

There happened to be a young man of callow effect who came to the theater on six successive nights, each time occupying the seat marked "A 101, Orchestra," on the coupon. He had to suffer the drums, but he was game. The plain fact is that he was in love, at a discreet distance, with Marcia. He cared nothing for the show—he knew it line for line, including the jokes—but his ardor for Marcia progressed from widening eyes to smiles, then to mildly disguised signals, and finally to flowers and notes carried by a heavily bribed water boy. Marcia sat in the dressing room she shared with other impossible villagers, and pondered on the foolishness of this evidently insane but very determined young man. To begin with, he was a hero—having lasted through six nights of a musical show that was

March, 1909—5

all sound and fury signifying nothing; also, the six seats had been subscribed for at the ruinous tariff of four dollars per; also, he had yielded to the grasping water boy a no doubt tremendous sum; also he was well dressed and looked as if hard work would not agree with him. Certainly he ought to have the price of a broiled lobster. It looked good to Marcia, and she longed for that lobster with a hunger that was painful, goading and beyond subduing. But lobster cannot be bought on the stipend paid to individuals of the chorus, and Marcia drew not one penny more (notwithstanding her Frederick record) than did Trixie of the other end, whose musical education had been garnered from an East Side "academy of vocal culture" in eight lessons, two of which she had missed.

So Marcia agreed to meet the young stranger at the stage door one night, and he called her pet names until she called his bluff. She began to instruct him in the rules, beginning with Rule No. 1, and impressing him with the fact that but one rule would be discussed at a time. Rule No. 1 insisted on lobster, broiled.

"Sure," said Reginald. "We will get it at the Café Français."

Whereupon it will be seen that no good comes of secrecy, and that Alphonse and Henri were doomed.

They entered the place just as the pianist was finishing with a flourish a gay number. The sound of mild applause was in the air. Alphonse, in retreat to his habitat under the stairs, gently felt of his shredded throat. Henri also was absent, imploring the chef to hurry a bird for an old party with a red nose who looked good to Henri for a sizable tip, and these things were not common. The old party took one peep at Marcia and then began to sit up straight. Reginald and she secured a table in the center of the room, distant about twelve paces from the piano, from which it will be observed that their position was very much exposed.

Enter Henri, a napkin slung jocosely across his arm in anticipation of the tip.

He had learned by this time to glide around and between the tables without ruining a skirt at each step, and he now announced to the old gentleman, with many graces borrowed from his old part of Don José, that the bird was coming speedily. Marcia saw Henri first. She gasped, paled and then giggled. She saw through his polite deception instantly, and, while she honored him for it, being Marcia, she could not suppress a touch of merriment, which was somewhat ill-advised. Then Henri, turning about, saw Marcia—also he saw Reginald. There comes a time in every crisis when the English language fails utterly in point of adequacy in description. It is quite within the possibilities that no language written could quite describe the expressions that thronged upon Henri's face. Like a sunburst lighting its usual melancholy came first surprise, then the wan pallor of realization, then the black of rage. It seemed that the lightnings must flash and the thunder roll from the gloom that overcast him.

One instant he hesitated—then off he posted to inform Alphonse that they were both discovered and betrayed. But that famous tenor entered before Henri had time to speak with him aside, and launched into a serenade. Times were busy in the Café Français at this hour, and it was Alphonse's cue to do as much troubadouring as possible, considering the condition of his throat. With the guitar slung at a jaunty tilt, and his round, fat body jouncing to his every caper, he came across the floor serenading. He knew that he must bend every effort to reach the topmost note of the third measure in the fifth line, and as he was ascending, he, too, saw Marcia and her escort. The piano succeeded in beating Alphonse by two notes to the end of the aria.

This was the limit. Many times had Alphonse sung "Escamillo," but never before had he felt all the soul-burning wrath of the bullfighter. To be sure he had Don José for a companion in misery. Henri held a tray filled with

salad and cold bottles as though he knew not what would become of it or him. The tremendous uplift of their common rage was filled with a saving pathos. Marcia had been discovered deceiving them. They did not, they could not, consider how they had deceived Marcia into this situation, but they drew aside convulsed by a magnificent sympathy for themselves. Two smoldering volcanoes could not have been more dangerous. A jolt, a loud noise, a whisper, a single "Hist!" would bring forth the threatened explosion and the consequent wreck. They trembled, the glassware on Henri's tray jingling in time with his nerves, and the fingers of Alphonse producing many a discord upon the strings of his guitar.

Marcia, with a woman's intuition, saw that trouble hung throughout the room in a somber, crape-like cloud. She sought to prevent the threatening outburst. The young gentleman who had asked her out to a lobster innocently misunderstood her signal, missed his cue, faltered with a bunch of wrong leads, and brought down the house. He had thought she longed for more food and blithe entertainment. The lobster had been excellent and the music made by Alphonse had sounded good to him. Moreover, he was paying for excitement, and there was a decided lull in the café life.

"Here, waiter!" he called, in the tone of one who must not be disobeyed, else he would be angry; "can't you fill the lady's glass? Why do you stand around, stupid! Bring another cold bottle, and have it cold! Here, you, minstrel—you in the green velvet—sing us another song!"

There came a crash and a scream of rage. Perhaps there had been two screams, but so blended were these in a common gnawing wrath loosed, that those within the Café Français heard only one—a long scream fraught with much tortured agony, as from an animal that has been aroused to an almost human suffering, a quivering, nerve-racking, filled-with-anguish scream. It proceeded from Henri and

Alphonse. With one accord, incapable of restraint, they had projected themselves in the direction of the gentleman who had been nice to Marcia. The crash was when Henri precipitated upon him the tray containing salad, oil dressing, shaved ice, cold bottles and general glassware. Henri seemed delighted in that he did this with a malevolent and altogether fiendish joy. Alphonse, looking like a fat demon, swung the guitar and brought it down with a shuddering whack. The strings hummed and tore apart, the wood splintered with a hideous noise, and its playing days were over.

So sudden had been this upheaval, so unexpected and spontaneous, that it seemed uncanny. Out of quiet and seeming peace, a song-filled, beverage-tuned silence, gentle and slumberous, had leapt wild, wicked revolution. There had been no checking it. It had been born with the swiftness of the lightning; it had worked with the deliberate menace of death. It was anarchy.

Marcia caught at the arm of Alphonse and begged him to desist. She slung herself alongside him with a gesture that smelt of Carmen. For the first time in the history of the opera it would be enacted with a third tortured one in the cast. But he was a recumbent actor. Don José and Escamillo, forgetting hatreds and joining forces, allies, in a word, hurried with an evil glee toward the torturing. They forgot dignity in their masterful rage. Henri stuffed lettuce dripping with oil down the collar of the unfortunate one, while Alphonse alternately pulled his nose and tried to saw an ear off with an abandoned guitar string. It was terrible! It was an assassination!

The Café Français was in an uproar. Chorus girls shrieked pitifully and crowded from the tables back to the walls; gentlemen in evening dress forgot themselves for the moment; the man with the red nose enjoyed it hugely, though over his face was an expression of intense bewilderment. The proprietor flung himself in at one door and out the other, wringing his hands

and screaming hysterically for the police.

Meantime the havoc proceeded undiluted with mercy. The young man was now under the table, with Henri and Alphonse baiting him from the sides.

"Ha! Villain!" shrieked Henri, in high-pitched Manrico notes.

"Wretch! *Sacré!*" screamed Alphonse, using the Canio movement and trying to thrust a fat finger into the gentleman's eye.

Suddenly there issued a roar from the rear. A chorus of policemen plunged through the crowd and flung themselves, clamoring much off the key, upon the persons of Henri and Alphonse and the prostrate gentleman. They lugged them to their feet. The picture was a distressing sight, mixed with salad, cold bottles, dressing, and a guitar that would never tinkle again.

Then the three were hustled off to a dungeon cell.

Marcia wept bitterly until the red-nosed gentleman drew her to a seat at his table, begging her not to worry and beseeching her to relieve his curiosity. Why had all this been? he wanted to know. Just then a man paused beside them and said to the red-nosed old gentleman:

"Colonel, if you could only get a scene like that for 'Pumpnickel'!"

"Ah! it would be famous in a night!" replied the other. "But unfortunately my stage man is never on hand to witness such real life. He will never be able to work it up."

Marcia wept on, but she listened through her tears. Thoughts came to her; she must save Alphonse and Henri; she had brought this disaster upon them and she must save them from ruin.

"My dear," said the Colonel, "tell me all about it—now do, there's a good girl."

"They are a pair of poor creatures," she began to improvise. "They are both mad with love for me, ever since we were on the stage together, and every

time they see me it maddens them and brings on that scene—they always repeat it—they think they are back with the show. . . ."

"The scene? What do you mean?—That they always beat up a man?"

"They did not know what they were about," she wept anew. "They saw me, and they only thought to enact our old turn again. . . . We used to bring down the house with it every night, but when I quit them all their genius seemed to be gone. . . ."

"Heavens!" cried the Colonel; "do you really mean they did that on the boards?"

"Yes, yes," sobbed Marcia, keeping up the local color.

"I can't remember the show."

"It was through the West," she explained with a despairing sob.

"I can believe it," said the Colonel. "But what were they doing here, if . . . if . . ."

"They couldn't get an engagement and they came to this—the two finest comedians in the business."

The Colonel sprang to his feet and seized his coat.

"Come, my dear!" he called; "we will rescue them. Harrison!"—calling to his man—"tell Smith that I must see him at eight sharp in the morning. Tell him I've secured the big scene for 'Pumpnickel.'"

These strange things only happen when angels stumble across our lowly paths. That was what the Colonel was—an angel, misguided, but well lined. He had been wasting away for the brilliant life. He had financed the opera "Pumpnickel." It was a miserable concoction of loose jingles and a plot that staggered. There was only one hope for it—a strong scene in the second act, which meant comedians. Those the Colonel had were impossible; those he wanted were given unto laughing at him and his cause. He had been in despair, but now he was alive to opportunity. Before midnight he had the two bailed out, and the rest of the wee sma' hours were spent in pleading, Marcia assisting. Henri and Alphonse held out nobly for Art to the end. The

Colonel capitulated. He agreed to allow them to interpolate one scene from "Carmen."

You have seen "Pumpernickel," no doubt. You will never forget that scene from "Carmen." The table business was as nothing to it. It made Marcia a star; it made the Colonel a manager with a fur collar to his great-coat, and, although they could not perceive it, it made Alphonse and Henri

too. Marcia had been right from the first. They were comedians. There is Art in everything, and only love can bring it to the surface and perfection. Had it not been for love, there would have been no battle; had it not been for Marcia, there would have been no angel.

And as for the young man who ordered lobster, he has reformed.

There is good in everything.



YESTERDAY

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

HERE is Life's full calendar;
 Here are hours of rest,
 Here are days and days of toil,
 And times for tears and jest:
 "None so good as those to come,"
 So the wise men say;
 But to me the best must be
 Ever—Yesterday.

Yesterday it never rained,
 Yesterday was fair;
 Not a sorrow dimmed the sun,
 Not a tear was there;
 Underneath the cloudless sky
 In the Always-May,
 All the earth was glad and young
 Only Yesterday.

Now the difference! The hours
 All have grown so long;
 Half the flowers are withering,
 Half the world is wrong;
 All my friends are growing old,
 I am growing gray,
 Waiting till tomorrow's sun
 Rise on Yesterday.

A FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR LIMIT

By MARION WHITNEY

"IT'S not that I believe in being mercenary," Seymour was wont to expound his favorite theory as far back as his Harvard days to the admiring group of undergraduates to be found always in his rooms. "I don't advocate for a moment anything sordid and vulgar, like marrying for money. It's only that I think matrimony should be put on a practical and philosophic basis instead of its present grab system. Talk of frenzied finance! Frenzied matrimony is the crying evil of the age. The greatest barbarism existing in the nation today is this love-in-a-cottage idea. It's marrying on nothing a year which is responsible for our divorces, for thousands more of unhappy homes, ruined ambitions and careers. And yet all this can be averted with the aid of common sense and a little care and self-denial," Seymour would explain with the patronizing tolerance of extreme youth. "It's merely a case of regulating the affections—give them free play, but within certain limits. A man should certainly marry for love—it is in the falling-in act that precautionary measures are so criminally neglected.

"The attractive poor girl is a luxury the man without means should deny himself as uncompromisingly as a yacht or an automobile. Instead, he should decide on the amount which, supplementing his own income, is necessary to support his family in comfort, and then allow himself to be brought in contact only with such members of the other sex as exceed that limit in possessions. Of course, introductions and occasional proximity can't always be avoided," Seymour was broad enough to admit,

"but even love at first sight can't prove *very* blasting if it is the only sight, and if he is a wise man it will be."

Seymour had abandoned almost all his college theories as well as illusions in the six years which had passed since then, but on this point the years had only served to intensify his convictions. He had consistently lived his principles, and was now complacently awaiting the development of the disease in the comfortable assurance it could only take an eminently eligible form, which in his eyes represented an income of at least fifty thousand a year. This, after a dispassionate review of birth, breeding, expensive tastes and the painfully inadequate support of the law, he had modestly set as his limit of acquaintance with the fair sex.

He no longer, however, gave vent to these sentiments with the freedom of earlier years in a world where one's loftiest motives are so often misunderstood. It was on the opening night of Mrs. Newman's house party that he expressed himself fully for the first time since college days.

He had been thoroughly disgusted when Mrs. Newman had told him his place at dinner. "I am going to ask you to take out a distant cousin of yours, little Margaret Seymour," she had said. "Her mother has loaned her to me for a couple of weeks and she has never been anywhere or gone out at all, so I thought she would feel more at home with you than with anyone else."

Seymour's gloom had lightened a little at the first glimpse of Peggy, and he set himself heroically to work at the raw schoolgirl material that he especially loathed. Conscientiously and

laboriously he was plowing through the health of their numerous relatives, when to his astonished indignation Peggy interrupted him.

"Must we go into *all* the ramifications of the family tree?" she inquired anxiously. "Ours is so very spreading I am afraid it will take all night."

"Of course I know this is a painful situation," continued Peggy easily to the speechless Seymour, "earlier recollections on both sides being scarcely complimentary and lightly to be touched upon—"

"Did I understand you to say on *both* sides?" demanded faintly her outraged relative.

"I am willing to be generous and say that," affirmed the Christianly forbearing Peggy, "though when I think how mean you used to be about your old fishing expeditions and tramps, and how you would brutally spurn my timid advances at every turn—"

Seymour found violent utterance at this. "Timid!" he ejaculated indignantly. "When I remember how my vacations were made hideous with that awful war cry of yours, 'Ca-a-an't I go, too?' and how no strategy was ever able to divert you from my path, and yet how sweet and unselfish and patient I always was—"

They both began to laugh, and Seymour for the first time looked squarely down into the black-fringed blue eyes, which, with the dark hair and Irish wit, Peggy monopolized from their mutual great-grandfather. He made an astonishing discovery.

"Upon my word, Peggy," he remarked blankly, "you are really pretty."

"Is it possible you have just discovered that?" returned Peggy with admirable aplomb, though she flushed with delicious youthfulness.

"But I can't understand it," explained Seymour, with the delightful frankness of relatives. "You used to have a lot of freckles and awful scraggly hair! If it were not for that landmark of your nose, I would never believe it was you."

"And even my nose has become re-

troussée instead of pug, now I am grown up," Peggy assured him excitedly.

Noting critically with suddenly awakened interest her prettiness, undeniable despite the nose, the joyous eagerness of her fresh youth and the pathetic simplicity of the gown it so proudly graced, Seymour's worldly heart surprised him with a sudden impulse of protective pity. Life so far had not proved a path of roses for Peggy's shabby little patrician feet. It was from a purely philanthropic desire to make up to her the brightness her girlhood had lacked that Seymour expounded to her the one feasible method. Peggy met this generosity with the basest ingratitude.

"I think it's contemptible to marry for anything but love," she remarked loftily, with the Seymour chin high in the air.

"Of course it is," agreed her exasperated relative, who took not a little credit to himself for clinging to this sentiment when more than one fortunate heiress listed for his favor had smiled into his handsome eyes undeniable readiness to do her part in making practical his theories. "The point is to use a little common sense in falling in love."

"If it's love there can't be any sense about it," argued Peggy firmly from the wide standpoint of twenty years and one evening in society. "As if when you saw a large enough income approaching you could decide, 'I will now fall madly in love,' and then go to work and manufacture thrills!" She sniffed contemptuously. "It just happens to you and you can't help it."

"But you can help being with people you can't afford to fall in love with," reexplained Seymour, the misunderstood, with exemplary patience.

Peggy shook her pretty head unconvinced. "The poor ones are always so much more interesting," she objected, with becoming modesty.

"That's an exploded theory," Seymour assured her. "There isn't a cleaner, finer chap at this table than Ashley Burton, who's worth his millions, and he'd make any amount better hus-

band than that of a penniless artist opposite you. Of course, I don't mean for a moment for you to *run after* fellows with money," Seymour admonished her paternally. "Only, don't waste your time with poor devils who can only bring you heartache in the end, whether you marry them or you don't. Just let yourself know the happy eligibles and then 'when it happens,' " he quoted her own graphic phrase, "it's sure to be all right."

"One can't begin too soon to follow such excellent advice," agreed Peggy sweetly, and forthwith turned her graceful shoulders upon the indignant Seymour, in sudden recognition of the neglected claims of her other neighbor.

"You are in love," she announced to him one evening, when his traitorous eyes at least had defied his code. "You are in love with that beautiful Elsie Grey, and the reason you avoid her so is not because the poor girl has smallpox, as one might infer from your actions, but because she is P-O-O-R!"

"And isn't it wise?" Seymour answered with more ease than he felt. "By keeping away from her I can imagine she has a mean disposition and her hair isn't natural, which illusions might possibly be dispelled on a closer acquaintance."

"They aren't either of them true," cried Peggy hotly, in generous indignation. "No one could look in her perfect face and believe such a thing. She's so lovely she makes me want to go off and cry," she ended wistfully.

She went on in a moment, heedless of Seymour's murmured denial of any such effect on him. "If I were in love with a girl like that," she said slowly, "I would be man enough to try to win her, no matter what it cost."

"To what end?" retorted Seymour, stung into betrayal by the scorn of the soft voice. "To take her from the class to which we both belong? To deprive her of her old associates? To ruin her beauty by work and deprivation? If you know what it means to be poor—"

He stopped in sheer shame. He had a sudden illuminating sense of the con-

trast between his own well-dressed, luxurious poverty, with its clubs, its theaters, its indulgences, and that of the girl beside him, whose poor little frock proclaimed so loudly the heartaches of self-denial—whose brave young laughter and sweetness showed her gallant acceptance of it.

"Yes, it is hard to be poor," said Peggy simply, with all the mocking brightness gone from her piquant face. She got up slowly and stood for a moment looking down at him with an unwonted gravity in the clouded blue eyes.

"If you just loved her enough," she pleaded, as she left him, with an earnestness new in Peggy, "you could make up for even that. There are worse things in the world than being poor."

It was the very next afternoon it happened. The day had started like any ordinary one. Seymour had got up, bathed, breakfasted, ridden and lunched with his customary well-bred boredom. The maid brought him the letter in exactly her usual manner; the envelope was the regulation kind; he even looked at it a few moments before opening it, in idle speculation as to its contents.

When he had read it he sat dazed, motionless, staring out with unseeing eyes at the June beauty before him. He could only grasp at first that the wealth he had always coveted, longed for and felt fiercely was his right was his at last and that with no effort no sacrifice, just because of a few flattering attentions to a disagreeable old man. It had been left to him with no conditions; there was no one to dispute it; it was his to do with as he would. He could live as he would know how to live. He could travel. He could marry Elsie Grey!

The scales suddenly dropped from his eyes, and his blind heart cried out tumultuously the truth. How could Elsie Grey's still loveliness ever satisfy him? It was Peggy that he wanted, laughing, teasing, gallant little Peggy, with her fire and her tenderness, her thorns and her sweetness—Peggy, who

mocked and allured and eluded in one bewildering breath. He marveled at his own blindness; how could he have helped but know from the very first? The fateful letter lay almost unheeded while, in uncontrollable impatience, he waited for her. He was in a fever to tell her his mistake, to see the love light steal into her eyes, to kiss away the sorrowful little droop all her laughter could not always keep from the sweet mouth. He exalted in the thought of how he would make it up to her for that barren, pitiful girlhood, with all that money and love could bring.

It seemed years before he heard her rapid footstep in the hall and could lead her into the little study and close the door. She had been riding with Burton, and was, as he loved best to see her, in the close-fitting dark habit which set off as nothing else could her high-bred charm.

"You are engaged to a million," she accused him as soon as she saw his face. "Nothing else could account for your looking really excited."

But Seymour could not stop for repartee or even a decent opening. He poured forth the love that was consuming him in a flood of ardent, incoherent phrases, while Peggy listened, motionless, with the look he had dreamed of in her lovely eyes.

He had forgotten all about the letter until it fell upon the floor, as he leaned across the narrow table between them, striving to read still more clearly that rapturous confession of her shy eyes and yielding hands. He told her then, with exultant tenderness, the great news and what it meant to them.

He felt the small, trembling hands lie suddenly still in his warm clasp. "How much money is it?" Peggy asked.

The question came to Seymour with a shock. It was not like Peggy either to know or care about the amount. When he answered she freed her hands swiftly from his.

"I'm afraid it isn't enough," she said in a curious, hard voice. "Mr. Burton asked me to marry him this afternoon, and he has a good deal more than that. You see how well I have learned my

lesson," she ended, with a laugh which made Seymour wince.

He stared in mute horror at the white young face across the table. The exquisite telltale color, the tender radiance which had glorified it a moment ago had gone. When she spoke it was with a deliberate and passionate scorn before which he stood stupefied, appalled.

"So," she said clearly, "I was not worth the winning when you were poor. I was not worth the working for, the sacrificing of a single selfish pleasure. But, now that you can afford it, you graciously condescend to fall in love with me. You can buy your automobiles now, your racers, your yacht—and me! I never dreamed you were rich when you spoke to me." Her voice broke piteously for the first time. "I could not help loving you, even when I thought you cared for that other girl."

Again that look of steady, implacable contempt, against which was powerless the masterful charm which had never failed him before, checked Seymour's impassioned movement toward her and froze him into despairing helplessness. "Yes, I love you," she repeated drearily. "Since I was a little girl I have loved you; you were always my ideal and my hero. And when I first saw you again, in spite of all you said, I could not believe you what you are—worldly, sordid, selfish to the core." The low, pitiless voice and the eyes he loved carried the accusation home to Seymour's racked and angry heart. "I thought you all those things that the honorable, true-hearted man is who asked me to marry him today. He could not teach me to love him because of you. If he ever does, as I pray he may, it will be still because of you, because such love as yours has taught me to value such as his."

Seymour broke hoarsely into a wild, inarticulate protest, "But I did not know I loved you. If I had known—"

"If you had known," she challenged him with sad prescience, "it would have been just the same."

The door closed inexorably behind her. He was alone with his fortune.

THOSE WHO ARE NOT HUNGRY

By BEATRIX DEMAREST LLOYD

IT may have been a higher longing that sighed for new worlds to conquer, but it is certainly a more universal one that craves new things to eat. This may be, to the miner who, famished after his hard day's digging, sits down night after night to devour and relish his coarse beans, a decadent point of view—if he understood the phrase, which, thank heaven, he probably doesn't. But the same man, or any other, icebound in the Arctic, would eat his own socks to stay the gnawing in his stomach. And that is no reason why the rest of us should relish lisle thread as the staff of life. Besides, it is not of the hungry—blessed class!—that we are speaking. Nothing is easier than to feed the hungry—from the *menu* point of view. The financial point of view is different, and does not concern the present discussion.

The point is—what to do for people who are not hungry, in a society where the sacred custom of breaking bread together has grown to such unwonted stature.

And here one goes back to the beginning of the gentle art of dining. It's a pleasant thing to contemplate the irradicability of a human kindliness. In the earliest ages of which we have any sociological data, the wayfarer along the road had but to stop at the door beyond which he could not urge his weary feet, and he was welcomed within, and from the frugal larder of the honest—or, more honor to them, dishonest—folk among whom he had blindly cast his lot, they set before him meat and drink. He needed it. They gave him what they had. It was the sweetest of all unwritten laws. And it

marked a great change when it came, that kindly impulse. Before then, a stranger was a thing to be assaulted. The man of the house in the Stone Age would have descended upon a wayfarer and cloven him to the earth—which sounds unpleasant and certainly was most inhospitable. When the change came, the memory of man cannot say. But out of the need of the wanderer grew the virtue of the householder, and from that the gentle sense of obligation—no more, among gentle minds, from one than from the other.

So the giving of refreshment came gradually to be a symbol of good-fellowship, and the mere bodily necessity of food took unto itself the spiritual meaning of a sacrament.

This was all very simple in the days when visitors were infrequent and when a man made horseshoes in exchange for turnips. It is not so simple now, and yet the basic fabric remains the same. The embroidery grows elaborate and magnificent, but the original cloth is there. Many people have embroidered it so thickly with rich arabesque that the foundation is forgotten, but let a thread or so ravel, and you will see in the indignation of the revolt that they have seen and realized the true background upon which they have expended so much labor. For people have not changed so very much, even if their ways of doing things have changed a great deal.

Well, gradually this sense of obligation—of generous courtesy toward the guest who supplied the glow that follows on gentle giving, and of grateful thankfulness toward the hospitable host—became one with the idea of sit-

ting at table together. After the housewife's and her daughter's bustling about, while the husbandman went out to kill a chicken—during which interval the guest sat alone before the fire—came the charming laziness of the meal, when the traveler told his story and drank his mead, and inter-exhilarating converse made the dinner of herbs an affair of stalled ox. The pleasure of the dinner hour became one with the pleasure of welcoming a stranger. And from that, it may not inconsequently be claimed, grew the delight of welcoming a friend.

"If we did this"—chicken killing and all the rest—"for someone we never saw before and shall never see again," (perhaps the daughter looks a bit wistful, and ten to one she is right) "why should we not kill another fowl and have our friends in to swap yarns?"

And so it began. A project either gathers enthusiasm or it fails. Bless them, it was not their affair that a new human interest should be productive of such tremendous results. They lived in a little world, and little did they realize that the killing of a domestic fowl and an invitation to a neighbor to partake of part of it should result in international wars.

So it began and so it grew. And at last the act of eating together became a sacred thing, a ceremony to be lifted to its most ineffable sense in the hour when the Perfect Man broke bread and gave a part of it to the poor creature who He knew was to betray Him.

Not even the kiss itself could have been more bitter in the mouth of the sinner than the crumbs of bread that he had taken in the moving hour.

So by jumps and starts and sacrifices and emotions it has grown—this breaking of bread. How few realize it—how few understand it! Ah, well, the best was ever for the few.

But nowadays the custom has become a formula. We no longer start up at a knock at the door, and light a fire and offer a meager thrift to the wayfarer. It grew from the habit of having a bounteous supply in case anyone should come, to asking them to come

at certain times. The formula has become ponderous and didactic. Why one should eat oysters before *bouillon* remains to be shown. The open art of giving gladly what one has has become the secret cleverness of getting what one wants to have. It has its origin in kindness, and in spite of the subsequent detraction of competition, may be praised because it is done for others, however the original impulse may be selfish.

But here we progress from the thought of the reason why and the impulse to the thing itself. A sweet custom inaugurated for hungry people, we cling to it as to our rudimentary tails when we make it a mere perfunctory but unavoidable way of proffering hospitality to those who are not hungry.

We want to show Jones a courtesy; we want to conciliate Smith; we must be nice to Perkins. What do we do? We invite them to come and eat. Somehow the figure of the dusty wayfarer, uninvited, regally welcomed, gladly served, will intrude itself among the flitting, satisfied throng, and his wondering eyes ask a question that we do not answer. And he fades away into oblivion.

But the question on the lips—or in the minds—of the gourmets present at this brilliant assemblage is: "What are we going to get to eat?"

No, it isn't pretty, and it may not seem true. But as they sit at table, consciously or unconsciously they ask it. The eternal oysters, or the everlasting caviar—or both! The inevitable *bouillon*, the unavoidable *filet* of sole, the undying sweetbread with peas, the remorseless *noisette d'agneau*—so it goes.

And having reached this point there is a general internal groan. We have eaten the spirit of the thing; we are now eating the flesh. And is it always to be like this?

Here we are hampered by a human liking to sit at table together, but released from the restrictions that made it an occasional instead of a daily, an almost hourly, affair—doing it every day, feverishly, necessarily, politically, and we have grown tired of caviar,

oysters, sole and sweetbread. We want something new to eat. The old flavors of lamb, beef and venison pall upon us. We do it every day. We dress ourselves in our newest clothes and go through the pleasurable tingling of a few envious stares. Then we look to the *menu*. Somehow the idea of dinner had allured us until then. We dreamed of things without recognition, something new and strange. And what is there? Lamb, beef and sweetbreads!

We sit fingering the abominable card and remember the French king's chef who made a *ragoût* of a pair of white kid gloves, and are almost tempted to order it. We decide on oysters and *bouillon* and—there you are! Something tiresome and chilling descends upon us. The glow is gone. We are—well, partially hungry—and we eat it. But where are the dishes that we dreamed of? We can have everything the city affords—provided we have received the belated cheque—and the city holds all there is in the world. But something is lacking. The service is impeccable, the *cuisine* is unchallenged—everything is perfect.

And yet—well, the fault lies in ourselves. One wedding *menu* is quite like another—it is this caterer's specialty. One dinner is like another. The supper after the same old Opera is just the supper we had last night. Somehow champagne will not be different every night.

We sit at a table with monogrammed napery, with the latest crystal glass, with neighbors dressed in lace and ermine and broadcloth, and the Hungarian musicians play the latest sensuous waltz. The limousine is waiting outside, and the newest basement front

white stone house is standing with electric burners burning low to welcome us back to our period bedrooms.

Why on earth should we remember at that moment that scientists are laboring night and day to give us seedless prunes and wireless communication and earthless ships? The chrysanthemums are yellow on the tables; the champagne and the diamonds sparkle; the city of endless unrest hums outside.

Somewhere there is a taut log cabin on the edge of a forest of pines; the waters of a lake ripple at the pebbles; the moon shines—or doesn't shine—through the treetops; pesky insects are trilling the joy of life; a canoe rocks on the water and a fire crackles and sparks under the stone chimneyplace, and the one you want and the one who wants you is before the flames, content, quiet, dreamy, drowsy. There is no human habitation for miles. You could walk on the pine needles till the soles gaped in your feet and you couldn't find a human creature. The stars in the sky are so clear they make you afraid. You can't quite look at the Great Dipper, and yet you feel yourself a part of every constellation. The little waves chuck at your feet—you have your arm around her shoulder. You have come down to the edge of the lake to speak to the night. Nothing breathes, not even you, yet everything is secretly and wonderfully alive. You feel the old earth turning "to meet the morning star." You are all swinging together—you and your moon and your stars.

And somewhere, far away, fretful people are wishing they had something new to eat. To eat—yes, honestly, something to eat!



EXPERIENCE is the only school that has no correspondence course.

THE FULL-BLOWN GENIUS

A Romance in Musical Form

By MARIA LINDSEY

THE PRELUDE

THE hands of the old clock in the palace hall pointed to twelve and the last sleepy page had gone to bed.

"My love," said the King, as he took off his golden crown and laid it on the mantelpiece, "what this court needs is a Genius."

"Dear me!" sighed the young Queen, suppressing a yawn, "isn't the orchestra full of them?"

"We have Budding Geniuses," answered the King reflectively, "and they are very promising—"

"And very rude," interrupted the Queen.

"But what we need," continued the King, "is a Full-blown Genius, and how shall we find him?"

"Ask old Schnapps," suggested the Queen.

"Yes, I suppose I must," groaned the King; "but the last time I discovered a Genius and brought him to Schnapps he shrieked, 'Ach, Gott im Himmel! Another!' and threatened to resign as conductor."

"I don't blame him," murmured the Queen.

"Thou dost not realize, my dear Bertha," said the King gravely, "the advantage of living in the atmosphere of Geniuses."

"Their hair is too long," objected the Queen.

"A mark of Genius, my love."

"And they're very untidy."

"Another mark of Genius."

"And they have no manners, and they are lazy and greedy and selfish."

"True! True!" exclaimed the King almost rapturously; "all—all marks of Genius!"

"Dear me!" sighed the Queen, "thou art welcome to thy Full-blown Genius. Give me a pet bear."

THE MAIN THEME

THE next day, when Schnapps appeared before the King, he bowed his bushy gray head very low and lifted his fierce black eyes no higher than the royal footstool; but anyone with half an eye could see that the King was more afraid of Schnapps than Schnapps of the King. On this account, perhaps, the Monarch, with a wave of his hand, dismissed his attendants and had it out with Schnapps alone.

No one knows what happened in this interview between the youthful Genius-hunting King and his irascible old conductor; but the magic might of royalty prevailed, and Schnapps reluctantly consented to set on foot a plan to find a Full-blown Genius, if such a being existed in the Kingdom of Glucklicheherzen.

At noon of the same day a herald stood forth upon the palace steps and blew a mighty blast upon a trumpet. The royal grounds were quickly filled with courtiers, pages and musicians.

"Hear! Oh, hear!" the herald cried. "His Gracious Majesty, King Adalbert, bids you come to a Tournament of Song, to be given in the month of May. The victor shall be chosen by the contestants themselves, and shall be crowned with a wreath of silver laurel leaves."

"Hear! Oh, hear!" mimicked the ugly Court Fool, jingling his bells and looking vacantly up into the tree-tops.

"Silence, noisy Fool!" said handsome young Friederich, one of the Budding Geniuses.

"I was talking to the birds," said the Jester gravely.

"What a dull joke!" sneered a pretty maid of honor, as she smiled at the Budding Genius and frowned at the Fool.

"'Tis not so bright as thy eyes, fair lady," said the Fool, bowing low; "yet, methinks, when it comes to a Song Tournament the birds ought to be invited."

So saying, he took the pieces of a flute from his pocket, screwed them together, and touching fingers and lips to the wooden reed, made so clever an imitation of bird notes that the bystanders laughed right merrily.

"Hear! Oh, hear!" began the herald again.

"Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra-a-a!" sounded more trumpets, and soon twelve heralds, mounted on twelve swift horses, galloped in twelve different directions to proclaim the Song Tournament in every village in the kingdom.

And now the Budding Geniuses bought rolls and rolls of parchment and sat up late of nights and were crosser and ruder than ever before. The King invited three Wise Musical Judges from a far-away kingdom to come and select from the parchments such songs as showed touches of Genius. Day by day these three Wise Musical Judges sat in the Concert Hall, and day by day the busy pages covered the table before them with rolls of parchment. The rejected songs were cast into a large box in the anteroom of the Concert Hall and were reclaimed by their disappointed composers.

In a short time the Kingdom of Glucklicheherzen resembled a beehive, for everybody, from the King to the scullion, went about humming bits of song. No man knew but that the fire of Genius might descend suddenly upon him.

The ugly Fool alone wandered forth into the forest and spent long, happy hours sitting under the trees, playing his flute and imitating the notes of the birds. One day, in the far, dim, green distance, he heard a clear soprano voice echoing the music of his flute.

"Another bird," he whispered softly to himself. Then he played a questioning call, which was quickly answered. Again he played and again the voice answered, this time nearer. Again and yet again the flute called, and again and yet again the jubilant notes were flung back louder and louder, until at last a Beautiful Young Maiden broke through a thick grove of young trees and ran toward him.

"Aha!" she exclaimed gaily, "now I have found you!" But when she ran up to him and recognized the Court Fool by his cap and bells and motley doublet she sank down on a fallen tree and gave way to peal after peal of laughter.

The Jester, pale and embarrassed, fingered his flute with downcast eyes. Gone was his ready wit and dumb his merry tongue.

"I am one of the singers brought to the Kingdom of Glucklicheherzen at the King's behest to interpret the new songs that are written for the Tournament," explained the Beautiful Maiden. "I have followed thy flute for days. I thought thou wast one of the Budding Geniuses." And the woods echoed with a fresh burst of girlish laughter.

But what was this? The eyes of the ugly Fool were filled with tears.

"Oh, forgive me!" cried the singer; "I did not know that Fools had hearts."

"Enchanting Voice of the Forest," said the Fool slowly, "the sweetest music makes men weep. Listen!" And putting his beloved flute to his lips he played a melody with such magic pathos that the heart of the Maiden fluttered and ached in her breast. "Once more!" she cried. "Ah, play it once more!"

But the Fool had unscrewed his flute, put on his cap and was making ready to leave the forest. The singer walked unnoticed by his side and glanced at him from time to time timidly.

"Hast thou made a song for the Tournament?" she asked suddenly.

It was now the Fool's turn to laugh. "What—I? Ha! ha! ha! Nay, nay, fair lady, the cap of a fool fits me better than your wreaths of laurel."

Who can resist the influence of a beautiful maiden? Not many wise men and therefore surely not a fool.

The next day one of the three Wise Musical Judges, poring over the songs, said, "Here is an unsigned parchment."

"'Twas made by the Fool," said a grinning page.

The three Wise Musical Judges puffed out their cheeks and turned up their noses. Was this a time for jesting?

The parchment was cast into the box in the anteroom and the Jester, hovering near and quick to see, claimed it with a harsh laugh, buttoned it tight inside his motley doublet and hurried away from the cruel looks of mirth and pity that followed him.

Deep in the forest he wandered that day, and when he thought himself far away from all mankind took out his parchment, pinned it against a tree trunk, and sat down and played his song over and over with only the birds to hear it.

"By Apollo, this thing is good!" he cried aloud. Then, taking a quill from his pocket, he plunged it into a forest berry, and with the crimson juice wrote his name at the end of the parchment.

"It is good," he repeated, with a yawn, "but Lord! I'm weary. Song making is no Fool's work."

So saying, he spread his mantle under a tree and, lying on it, slept heavily until the sun went down.

Old Schnapps was closing the doors of the Concert Hall at twilight when a wild figure, dusty and disheveled, fell upon him. "Help me!" cried the Fool. "Someone stole my song while I slept in the forest."

"Wasn't it rejected?" asked old Schnapps gruffly.

"Yes, but for that I care naught," cried the Fool, with passion. "I want it! I want it! 'Tis mine! I made it!"

Old Schnapps, bewildered by this strange show of feeling in the Jester, laid a kindly hand on the ugly creature's shoulder and patted it. In truth, he thought him slightly mad.

The Budding Geniuses made merry over the stolen song. "Lend me thy quill, most gifted Fool," cried long-haired Otto. "I want its inspiration."

"Heydeyl musical Jester," cried handsome Friederich; "make another song or thou wilt not win the laurel wreath."

But the Fool made no more songs. He crept back into the forest and in the shade of the quiet, friendly trees returned to his innocent pastime of mocking the birds.

At last came the week of the Tournament. Night after night King Adalbert and Queen Bertha sat in the royal box on the right of the stage and looked out on the eager, intent audience. To the left of the stage sat the three Wise Musical Judges in a box always reserved for Great Men. Half-way back on the stage sat the orchestra of Budding Geniuses, grim old Schnapps in their midst, while in front of them sat the Great Singers who had come at the King's behest to interpret the songs of Genius. Least known and most simply clad was the Beautiful Young Maiden, the singer who had met the Fool in the forest. She tried now and again to give the poor creature a friendly glance, as he wandered at his will from place to place, but he refused to remember her and finally hid himself in the rear ranks of the orchestra.

Now the last song of the Tournament, composed by no less a person than old Schnapps, fell to the part of the Maiden, and her flutelike voice so well revealed the beauty of the music that she was most heartily applauded.

"Encore! Encore!" shouted many voices.

A close watcher would have said she meant to sing again. A signal to the harp—a few soft chords—then a song of piercing sweetness gripped the hearts of the people. The birdlike notes, upheld by the harp, made har-

monies so strange, so entrancing, that the blood ran cold in the veins. The King grasped the hand of the Queen. Old Schnapps, self-forgetful, leaned forward, his eyes burning bright under bushy brows. The Fool lay back in his chair, his ugly face dead white, his eyes closed.

In the silence that followed the song one scarcely breathed. The King looked towards the three Wise Musical Judges. They shook their heads and stared in a bewildered way.

"Who made the song?" cried the King aloud.

"A Genius, Your Majesty," replied old Schnapps huskily.

"A Genius!" echoed the Budding Geniuses.

"Speak, Maiden," said the Queen; "who made the song?"

"Walter von Linden," answered the singer, in her clear, sweet voice.

"And who is he?" asked the King. For answer the Maiden turned and moved swiftly through the ranks of the Budding Geniuses to the Fool, who sat leaning his head against a big bass viol. She took him by the hand and led him as one sleepwalking to the center of the stage.

The applause, the bravos, and the pressure of the silver laurel wreath upon his brows made real what seemed only a Fool's dream, and those who saw him said that his ugly face became beautiful when he smiled into the eyes of the thief who stole his song.

THE POSTLUDE

"ADALBERT," said the Queen to the King very late that night, "I cannot sleep for thinking."

"What troubles thee?" inquired the King politely.

"I am not troubled," said the Queen, "but I marvel greatly to think that unwittingly thou hast breathed the atmosphere of Genius all these many years."

"My love," said the King patiently, "I am too sleepy for conversation."

"But didst thou never perceive a mark of Genius about the Jester?" persisted the Queen.

"Who could expect to see a Fool turn into a Genius?" grumbled the King crossly.

"Hast thou never seen a Genius turn into a fool?" retorted the Queen triumphantly.

But the King was snoring royally.



COFFEE AND CIGARETTES

By KATE MASTERSON

THE man behind the gun is the man who wins life's battle.

A mint julep isn't really so cool, but it looks shady.

The modern heaven is not reached in a single bound, but by a moving staircase. The other place by chute.

Given the duke, any girl will furnish the kind heart that is more than coronets.

Don't do it today. It may be the wrong thing to do at any time.

All the old cats were kittens once.

CHANCE

By CHARLES SOMERVILLE

JOY possessed Arthur Gardner, thrilled in him, warmed him so that as he strode down Fifth Avenue the sharp October winds that lifted the dust and swirled it, that flapped his thin summer serge clothing about his long, lean arms and legs, could not chill him. Every little while he lifted his happy, excited face so high that the wind slapped up the wide brim of his shabby soft black hat. When it did there were revealed a smooth, broad forehead, heavily defined black eyebrows and big, clear, brown eyes; a nose, mouth and chin hewn in sturdy lines, but not yet settled to full maturity, a face presenting that interesting duality of boy and man often seen at twenty-five.

Only a little time before he had slunk up the marvelous Avenue, eyes and lips bitterly set against the panorama of luxurious store windows, parading automobiles, hansom and broughams, and promenading men and women in fine attire. Each happy woman's countenance had goaded him by recalling the sad face of Elsie, his wife. The sight of each prosperously attired stroller of his own sex had stung him with thoughts of his wretched poverty, and, worse than that, assailed him with doubts of his own competency, his right to the aspirations he cherished of winning high place in the world.

Thus dejected, he had arrived at his destination, which was Russell's art gallery. Ten minutes afterward he had come out of it with a hand thrust into a pocket of his trousers, and yellow notes to the value of a thousand dollars were in its grip. For a time, as he strode along, he worked his fingers to make the stiff,

yellow notes crinkle, finding in the sound a delightful reassurance that he wasn't dreaming.

When he closed the door of Russell's and got outside his first thought was to hurry to a street car. Then he stopped and laughed—why not a cab? But he told himself that a street car would crawl and a hansom would be held up at every corner by the traffic policemen, and, anyway, he was sure that he couldn't sit quietly, couldn't sit at all with his heart bounding and his nerves tingling as they were then. He was honestly afraid that he might begin to cheer or sing if he tried to sit still in a car or a cab. Besides, he was certain that his legs would carry him most swiftly to the little, out-of-the-way, old-fashioned street in Greenwich Village and to the faded red brick house and to the top story of the house where was Elsie.

As he hurried over the crossings, there were occasions when horses were dragged back upon their haunches and trolley cars and motor cars were brought to a halt with a crunch of brakes to prevent their striking him. Gardner didn't notice these things at all. He was picturing a scene of great happiness—himself banging into the rooms on the top floor of the house of bricks of faded red; yes, that was the way he would do it, throw open the door with a force that would bang it against the wall, and after that, with Elsie standing startled before him, he would dance up to her waving the yellow notes; he would throw them in the air; he would take her in his arms and whirl her around the room, and he'd be shouting the while:

"Elsie!—Elsie!—It's over!—It's over! A thousand dollars, Elsie—a thousand dollars! Who do you think bought the picture? Moran—Moran—H. Stuyvesant Moran, Elsie! Says it's great! Had a little critic along with him, too! Little critic said it was great; going to write a lot about it. I'm to do a portrait of Moran—of his grandchild, of his sister, of his uncles and his aunts; of his whole nice, lovely, fine, beautiful family. And of his prize-winning setter dog, too—if I'll 'condescend to paint such a subject.' Russell's own words, sweetie dear. Let's throw the dirty little old stove out of the window, bang the old dishpan on the landlord's head and hug each other till we're blue in the face—Elsie, you dandy, plucky little girl!"

Gardner paused in his rhapsody, considering that indeed she had been plucky. Through a year of sordid, humiliating poverty, through a year of such wretched, intimate economies that it made one's face redden to practice, she had met all their mean misadventures with constant love in her eyes for him and on her lips a smile always of humor to meet his smile, softening the struggle wonderfully.

Once only—that morning—she had broken down. But sufficient had assailed them to strike a sickening blow at his own spirit of hopefulness, to say nothing of an organism so sensitive as that of his small, slender mate. Unconsciously his pace slackened, and the dancing lights of joy faded out of his eyes as his recollection dwelt on the morning.

There was the little pine table with its ugly white-figured red tablecloth and the white napkin laid by Elsie over that end of the table on which she served breakfast—a soft boiled egg for each in heavy tumblers and with pewter spoons; a third egg in a little dish; the can of condensed milk; the sugar in a glass bowl, the tin coffee pot and the heavy cups—articles provided in the "cosy apartments for light house-keeping" of the faded red brick house. He looked through the "Help Wanted" columns. They mocked him. They

told him of many false hopes of employment on previous days. Then the date line of the newspaper caught his eye. After that he glanced hurriedly across the table at his wife. He knew that she had seen the newspaper; she, too, must have noticed the date line. He was sure of that because she was not looking toward him now; did not look toward him, although he felt that she was conscious of his glance; did not look toward him with her lips pursed in their usual small, courageous smile. Her glance was turned toward her workbasket, standing on the table beyond the breakfast things. Her hand was lying listlessly atop of it and upon that which drooped over its edge—a tiny white wool sock with the knitting needles still in it.

So he bent forward and patted her hand.

"Don't you care, dear," he said, "even if we are celebrating our wedding anniversary on three eggs."

She was quick to respond and in his own tone:

"The idea—how dare you accuse me of complaining?"

"I wasn't," he said. "I only asked you to try not to care."

"I'm sure I don't," she sought to assure him, with a quick shaking of her head. "Other couples may be celebrating their anniversary with more food around the house than we have. But how about the love part of it, Mister Michael Angelo? I rather guess we've as much of that in our house as any of them."

The little humorous smile that he adored reappeared. But he could not passively accept it.

"Oh, of course, you've no reason in the world to complain—not the least little bit. We lived on four dollars last week; we're struggling on three this, and—of course, it would be perfectly ridiculous of you to complain or for you to stop and think how infinitely better for you it would have been if you'd gently but firmly sent me packing off about my business over there in Paris."

"Pooh! Pooh!" she said. "You

wouldn't have gone anyway." She aimed a finger at him. "Don't you dare tell me that you would have gone."

He shook his head in a laughing, mocking affirmative. Over in Paris he had found her living luxuriously, a governess in a family of wealthy Americans. It was a family that had been wealthy a long time, and so the gentle little governess was appreciatively given an equality with all the members of it, an equality effortlessly and amiably offered.

"They were fine folk—those Grangers," he observed.

She nodded a quick assent.

"They meant to do very well by you if you had made a nice, sensible marriage," he went on.

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, yes, they did," he asserted. "They told me so when they asked me not to come and see you any more."

"Arthur," she said, "see that egg in the dish? I boiled it hard."

"Indeed?"

"Well, it is really a very important announcement," she answered, with a little gurgle of laughter in her throat. "It indicates a very noble conception of fairness on my part."

"Explain, if you please, Mrs. Gardner."

"Oh, if I must explain, you monstrously stupid creature," she bantered, "it was done because you can divide a hard boiled egg much more accurately than you can a soft one."

He watched her as she proceeded to demonstrate the fact.

"You did make a nice, sensible marriage—come now, didn't you?" he reiterated.

"I should say so. I married the finest young artist in all Paris."

"And without a cent."

"He won the gold medal of the Paris Salon, and I just wish you wouldn't introduce the subject of money in connection with a thing like that."

Gardner grimaced.

"I had to when I pawned it," he said.

He was immediately sorry that he had insisted on baring his self-reproach,

for her gray eyes widened and were very grave and her soft lips came together tightly. He laughed as gaily as he could and got up and walked behind her chair. He glanced around the room. It was rather large, and with its scant furnishings looked the more bare. There were the two pine chairs, an old horsehair upholstered rocker and the pine table. They had stuck a few charcoal sketches on the soiled walls. In a far corner was another pine table, coverless, with the oil stove and other ugly cooking utensils on it. There was a cupboard in the wall with its small supply of heavy cups and chipped plates and saucers. On a yellowish white marble mantel shelf were his paint tubes and brushes, and stacked against the one-time fireplace were canvases—pictures that had gone to the art dealers and had come back—and a battered, paint-stained easel, folded. On tubes and canvas and easel dust had settled. It occurred to him that he might as well kick the canvases into the fireplace and touch a match to them, and he told himself that he was quite satisfied that dust had gathered on tubes and canvases and easel. Dust was used to bury material things—why not illusions?

She had turned quietly and was observing him.

"Arthur," she said in a voice very low, as if she feared she might not be able to command it, "I've been very much worried about you. I haven't wanted to bring the subject up, but I have been afraid that you were losing—losing—well, you see, Arthur, you have not painted anything for weeks."

He walked back to his place at the table and faced her. "Oh, haven't I, though?" he demanded. "How about the handsome decorative panels in red, white and blue—chalk—on the mirrors of at least fifty saloons in the first city of America—the American Eagle holding Star Spangled Banners crossed in his claws—winter village scenes with the chalk scraped off to make the cottage windows—one dollar per beautiful work of art; standard *impasto* and *chiaroscuro* absolutely guaranteed."

"Ah—don't!" she said. "I didn't mean to remind you of that."

"And perhaps," he went on, with what he intended to be a magniloquent gesture of his arm, but which went a little queerly wild in spite of himself, "perhaps you do not know that I may get the opportunity to paint the largest still life picture ever seen in New York. Yes, indeed! A whisky bottle down the whole side of a fifteen story building—that's all!"

"Arthur—Arthur," she said. "Don't! You'll simply break my heart."

"Ormyneck," he interjected. "And, Elsie, I wish most sincerely that I had, before I dragged you into all this wretchedness."

But Elsie, in her faded pink house gown with its bits of lace at throat and elbows, moved over to him and placed her hands on his shoulders.

"If it comes to that, Arthur," she said, "I am to blame for everything. I shouldn't have come to you this way—you understand—quite without money. I should not have done it. It was selfish of me. I had some sort of vague notion that I would be able to help you. I know now that I never exactly figured out how. I'm afraid I just counted on my love alone to help. It was utterly selfish of me. For months I've been thinking, Arthur, thinking about it all, and it terrifies me. It terrifies me to realize that, instead of a help, I am an obstacle to you—a heavy burden. Oh, it's true! It is only too terribly true."

He drew no comfort in noticing the while she spoke in this new manner, with this new depth of tone in her voice, that her face was quite as girlish as on the day he married her; quite as girlish, save that, perhaps, there was a little more fullness at the chin and in the tenderly rounded throat with its suggestion of a suffusion of crimson constantly coursing under the delicate flesh. He found no ability to speak until after she had dropped her hands from his shoulders and walked away, brushing up with her fingers as she went the fallen tendrils

of her soft, golden hair from her neck and ears.

"Well, if that isn't a fine way to talk!" shouted Gardner, with a loud, big assumption of indignation, as one might burlesque the pose for the amusement of a child. "Don't you try any more of that, young lady. If you do, I'll—I'll not eat my half of the third egg. I'll throw it at you. Now, then, you—you be good!"

He meant to continue in this vein until her countenance had altogether dismissed its pain, but now that she had gone back to the table and unwittingly laid her hands upon the little white stocking in the basket, he was silent.

Elsie's lowered eyes seemed to be scrutinizing the tracery of tiny blue veins in the backs of her small hands as, one upon the other, they rested above the white wool thing. Without looking up at him, she said:

"It's no use, Arthur; I can't laugh it away any longer. It is not very brave of me, perhaps—but, dear—dear boy, it is brave of you not to let yourself hate me. Why, I can see—and you must have thought—how it is going to be. You will be doing this mean thing or that mean thing, painting this picture or that, at any price, just to keep—to keep this sort of a home together. If you were alone, it wouldn't matter much. The business of mere living would not have to worry you a great deal. And you would go on working with your ambition unspoiled and recognition would be bound to come. You are a great artist, Arthur—I have come between you and your work—your life work. There are to be new cares, too—soon—very soon. I am so utterly unable to help you—to be anything but a heavy care to you—a care that may in the end kill all the ambition in you, make you commonplace, a drudge in an art where you should rank a master. In Paris, when I used to stroll with the children in the parks, I had such sweet day dreams—I used to feel so proud to think that you loved me and that I might bring the inspiration of beauty and tenderness into

your work. That is how I thought it would be. And instead—instead, it is sending you out to make chalk pictures on saloon mirrors. That's the hard truth."

Suddenly she caught up the wee white stocking and pressed the soft wool to her cheek and then to her lips to hold back the sound of sobbing. She walked unsteadily to the old horse-hair rocker and sank there and huddled and still clasped the little white thing to her lips.

Clumsily, stupidly, Gardner stood staring, whipped by an agony of un-availing sympathy. It was not until she looked up at him that he could find words.

"Little girl, little girl," he called to her. "I haven't known that it has been as bad as this—I didn't realize how much you must have been suffering all this time."

He was going to her with his arms outstretched. But she put up her hand.

"Don't, Arthur—don't. I'll cry again."

She forced her little smile to appear. Then, as there came a knock on the door, she ran gently through the bedroom doorway, ashamed that any stranger might see her swollen eyes. Opening the door, Gardner faced a boy who gave him a note. It was from the art dealer. It conveyed simply a request that he call at the gallery some time during the afternoon. Gardner had received a number of summonses like that. They had always signalized the further request that he take his pictures away.

"All right," he nodded to the boy, and closed the door. Elsie looked out.

"What is it, Arthur?"

He shirked telling her of a fresh defeat.

"From the landlord," he said, and was angry at his dullness, for her face grew as troubled as if he had told her the truth. "A note," he continued, "about the rent. But there's nothing to worry over. It's a very mild note—quite polite."

She had taken up her knitting while he prepared for the street, and when, on

leaving, he stole up behind her and caught her soft chin in the curl of his strong, lean young hand and lifted her face to kiss her, he was shocked to find it quite white and rigidly drawn in lines of sorrow. However, there was a dollar to be earned by doing a real, white and blue picture on the looking glass of Casey's Palace Hotel, and it was the only dollar offered to his hand. He did the garish picture there. It was nearing four o'clock when he finished. But he had walked the streets for an hour before he finally set his teeth and went into Russell's—entered fully expecting to mope out humiliatingly with his rejected canvas under his arm and then—then . . .

The quietness of his surroundings after the rattle of the Avenue and crossings brought Gardner out of the mental scene that he had recalled vividly in all its details; quite as if it had been a poignantly sad play in a theater where one did not mind the sobs that lumped in one's throat because of the underlying cheering assurance that, after all, it wasn't true. He found himself halfway across Washington Square. The house of faded red brick was very near now. And that was good. Again he swung into a joyous stride. How about dinner that night for Elsie and himself at Delmonico's or Sherry's or the little Lafayette? Well, hardly. Their clothing was too shabby. It was late now; the stores all closed. Tomorrow Elsie should go to all the shops and tomorrow he would go to the big stores himself and tomorrow night—tomorrow night their clothing wouldn't be shabby. He would have a cab to take them to all the stores, and the dinner, of course, would be in a private room, say, at the little Lafayette—just themselves; and afterwards, if Elsie felt sufficiently strong, they might steal unobserved into a theater and sit well in the gloom of a box and listen to clever comedy and hear lively music attuned to their new happiness.

Passing a delicatessen store, he was tempted to go in and buy a chicken roasted to a crisp brown that he saw on

a platter in the window. He might take that home and with it a bottle of champagne, and they could have a kind of preliminary feast. But he decided that he'd rather she should see all the money—every yellow bill intact, and it should be she who would have the pleasure of spending the first one.

He ran up the stoop of the red brick house, and as he had planned, bounded up the four flights of stairway, which exuded a mustiness that is poverty's unmistakable odor. The frail rails swayed under his strong hand as he made the ascent.

Nearing the top, however, Gardner abandoned his idea of banging the door open and rushing in upon her. It would be more fun to steal in softly, to approach her dejectedly, as if at the end of a crushingly disappointing day, and then suddenly display the money and give vent to the exultation that throbbed in his breast for expression.

Noiselessly he turned the knob and entered the room. It did not avail; Elsie heard him. She was sitting at the table in the center of the room, and the face she quickly turned at his surreptitious entrance robbed him of immediate happiness.

"Why—why," he said, "you are still crying!"

"Oh, no!" she said. "Honestly, I just began again this minute."

He was beside her.

"Why?" he asked, and as he did so, he saw on the table a big envelope. There were five postmarked stamps in the corner. The letter he saw was addressed to his wife in her own handwriting. "What's this, Elsie?"

"I wrote a novel," she said. "And it's been sent back to me."

"A novel," he questioned, savagely biting back the smile that rose to his lips.

"Yes—just a cheap little novel with a factory girl heroine and a gentleman villain and a workingman hero in it. I thought one could always sell that kind. It was my attempt to help, Arthur. You see what's come of it. I cannot even do that much—write a cheap little novel."

"How do you know you can't?" he demanded severely. "Why, I guess you don't know that Lew Wallace went around seven years peddling 'Ben Hur,' and there was Kipling and—and—"

"And Elsie Gardner."

He was happy to see her smile. And then his hand went down for the money. But he did not draw it out. Trouble came into his fine brown eyes. It would be bumptiously egotistical for him to tell her now—tell her that he had won at the very moment when she had lost. It wouldn't do at all. No matter; there was no great reason for haste. Anyway, now that he thought of it, just to fling the money up in her sight seemed rather tame; it would not in the least realize the dramatic possibilities of the joyous situation. He would think of a better way. Meanwhile he fished in the change pocket of his coat and brought out the two half-dollars he had earned making a mirror picture for the bar at Casey's Palace Hotel.

"What'll we eat?" he asked, holding the coins before her eyes. "Think of a nice little supper." She arose and went toward the closet where her hat was. "No—no, Elsie, you tell me and I'll get it," the young husband commanded. "There must be no more running down and climbing up stairs by you. I cannot allow it."

So she wrote out a list of articles that he was to buy at the little stores in the neighborhood, and when he had returned and she was busy over the detested, reeking oil stove, he went into the bedroom, threw off his coat and put on an old dressing gown—a relic of his student days—knotted the purple silken rope, sat in the big rocker and delighted himself with devising the manner in which he would make Elsie aware of their dazzling good fortune. His glance settled on the little white stocking, and when it did his eyes kindled. That would be the thing—he'd put the money inside that little white worsted foot. Hitherto, he had been afraid to look at it when it lay on the work-basket or was held in Elsie's working

fingers under the clicking, glistening needles. The tiny worsted shape had terrorized him. He smiled triumphantly at it now. He looked swiftly in Elsie's direction. She was all engrossed in her task. In a second he had slipped the flattened packet of yellow bills into the stocking, quite down to the toe. It made the foot bulge somewhat, but not much. He threw himself back in the chair, rolled a cigarette and hummed the while a pleasantly lilting old French song.

He was merry during the little supper, but her effort to meet his mood was so apparent that they ended the meal in silence. He made a show of renewed ambitious impulse, putting up the old easel and a frame of canvas and bringing the two lamps to bear upon it while he worked with a stub of charcoal. But he worked with scarce an idea of what he intended to bring forth, and Elsie, watching, could see that it was pretense. Still she watched him quite steadily till he flung the stub aside and said, "There's no work in me tonight." He looked at her and laughed. If she only knew! The while he had been watching by stealth, hoping to see her move to the rocker and take the workbasket in her lap and the slender needles in her hand. He went to the mantel shelf and busied himself rearranging the paint tubes blindly, and finally decided on a bold stroke.

"Aren't you er—er—going to do any—any knitting tonight?" he asked in tones meant to be casual, but his voice played him wavering tricks.

"Not tonight," Elsie replied. "I'm tired. And I've cried oceans of tears and my eyes hurt. I think I'll go to bed."

On her way to the little room, she paused to kiss his forehead lightly. He watched with keen disappointment the door as it closed. His plan had failed. Still he hugged the idea of her coming suddenly upon the money herself—of her eyes shining big with delight; of her glad cries as she would run to him with the wealth waving in her fingers.

He got up suddenly. He took up

the white sock, dug out the money and then, taking exquisite enjoyment in the performance of his task, he slowly spread the money, note by note, in a circle widening from the center of the table. There were fifty yellowbacks, and they made an impressive centerpiece on the white-figured red cloth of the cheap pine table. He lifted the lamp from the center of the circle and put there, instead, the white stocking. He stood back and surveyed the effect and chuckled, and, with his hands, softly applauded himself.

Why not call her out right then—that minute? He went softly to the bedroom door, opened it and peered within. His wife did not speak. Nor yet could he hear her breathing as if in sleep. But he concluded that she had fallen into slumber, and withdrew. He would not waken her. He would not call her out. After all, that would spoil half the fun. He would leave the money all there, just as it was, and go to bed himself.

And when she arose in the morning, she would awaken him before leaving the room to prepare breakfast, and he would steal softly behind her and be there to catch her in his arms when she made the great discovery.

He undressed outside in the big room, fearing to disturb her, and when finally he took his place at her side, he was conscious that she stirred a trifle, but as she did not speak he lay there quietly. It seemed to him that he was wakeful for hours. He pictured the scene of the morning again and again with pleasure unabating. And then he slept.

He awakened slowly and drowsily from a dream in which Elsie had been pouring yellow paper money upon him from a workbasket of exhaustless contents until he decided to lift his arms out of the fantastic pile and catch her and kiss her.

He smiled and turned over to settle into sleep anew. Instead, he lifted his head and peered as well as he could in the darkness at his wife's place in bed. He had been struck by the consciousness that it was vacant. He put out his hand and knew that it was true. It

was not entirely dark in the room. The blackness of night had turned into purple, and through the purple there came the first suggestion of a heliotrope haze.

If she had arisen in the darkness she had surely lighted the lamp outside, and she must already have made the discovery of the money spread on the table. But if this were true, why was she not there rejoicing with him? He sat up in bed and peered toward the outer room, but saw no sign of light. He thought, however, that he saw vaguely Elsie's figure in the doorway. He called to her.

"Elsie—are you there?"

There was no answer and now he thrust his head forward, and still he seemed to see her standing there.

"Elsie!" he called again, but as silence followed he got up and moved slowly, undecidedly toward the door. He could see that it was open. Surely that was Elsie standing there, facing him, her back toward the door.

"What's the matter, little girl? Are you ill? Come to bed; you'll catch cold. Or, at any rate—here—take this."

He lifted the old dressing gown from where he had thrown it over the foot-rail of the bed before retiring. There being no response, he continued his way forward. As he neared the door, he stumbled against a chair and thrust it out of the way.

"Elsie," his voice rose in alarm, "Elsie—why—what's the matter? Why don't you speak?"

He saw her certainly now—so certainly that he thrust out his hand and caught her by the wrist. It was ice cold. Its touch revolted him. He drew back with an involuntary movement of fear. But he clung to her wrist, and as he did so, that happened which caused the muscles of his throat to shrink and tighten as if he had swallowed fire. He choked and gasped and the sweat of horror wet his face. For her body—the lower part—had swayed, and *her feet had swung free of the floor!*

On the floor below, directly beneath the Gardner rooms, middle-aged Mrs. Clancy sat suddenly up in bed, clutch-

ing at the throat of her nightdress with an agitated hand.

"Merciful God!" she whispered. "What was that?"

She remained listening intently for a few seconds, and then turned and shook the shoulder of her sleeping husband.

"Dan, Dan, man, wake up!"

Clancy blinked sullenly.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Somethin' awful—upstairs—up there where the young feller and his wife lives. There was a scream, Dan—an awful scream!"

"It's a nightmare ye're after havin'," decided Mr. Clancy. But as he spoke they heard from above the sound of feet moving unsteadily, heavily, stumbling as an object was drawn across the floor.

Clancy lurched out of bed.

"I'll go up," he muttered.

"I'll light the lamp for yer," said his wife.

Lamp in hand, Clancy clumped slowly upstairs. The widow and her little daughter from the rear rooms were out in the hallway, shivering, frightened, listening. He knocked at Gardner's door. There was a pause, the lock fell back, the door opened and the lamplight struck Gardner's face. It was white, distorted, chattering. He stood aside to allow Clancy to enter, and the other did so, slowly, doubtfully. Gardner walked behind the burly figure with the light. Clancy halted at the center table and put down the lamp. He stared at the yellow riches spread on the table. He looked up from the money and eyed the room. He saw a rope trailing from the knob on the outside of the bedroom door—a purple, silken rope. He saw in the rocker the figure of Elsie Gardner. Her head was flung back. He saw her throat.

He drew back, his mouth gaping, and swiftly averted his eyes. He turned to stare at Gardner. The young artist nodded crazily, grinning at the figure in the chair, and raised a storm of hideous, cackling laughter. His shaking hands had taken up several of

the yellow notes and were slowly and mechanically tearing them to pieces. He continued nodding at the figure in the chair and went on with his insane laughter.

"For God's sake, man," cried Clancy, "shut up!"

Suddenly the big Irishman turned and fled.

If memory serves accurately, it was some two years afterward that an artist of a somewhat newly attained celebrity exhibited a picture which attracted wide attention because of its sensational power. It symbolized Chance. There was a huge central figure, not an ape nor yet a man, but of

resemblance to both. It was a giant, and it walked ruthlessly through a drove of scurrying, tiny human beings. With one big hand it scattered to the little men and women the sweets of the world—flowers of love, the gold of success, the laurels of fame. But the other arm of the monster, long, enormously powerful, wielded a scourge. Many that the whip had struck down still clutched in their pain-distorted hands the gifts of the god. But for those who beheld the picture, it was in the eyes of the huge Thing that the greatest horror and terror lay. They were not the eyes of a man nor even so human as the small, vicious eyes of an ape. They were the blank eyes of idiocy.



YOU AND I

By EDNA S. VALENTINE

NOT all the lore that was learned by the sages
 And wise men of years gone by—
 Not all the magic that men of past ages
 Drew down from the stars and the sky
 Makes the magic together in all winds and weather
 Like just the two words—you and I.

Not all the sweets that summers have taken
 From garden and close and lea—
 Not all the blossoms June breezes have shaken
 On the years ago and to be
 Hold half the sweetness in all love's completeness
 Of the tale your lips tell to me.

Not all the bells that love has set ringing—
 Bride-bells under skies so blue—
 Not all the songs that lovers went singing
 Since ever the world was new
 Tell half the gladness—so deep it's near sadness,
 That sings in my heart to you.

MAM'SELLE VIOLETTE

By E. CRAYTON McCANTS

MAM'SELLE VIOLETTE—that was what they called her in the little Arkansas town close to the Louisiana border, although she was American by nativity and at least half English by descent. And Violette Le Duc was the name that she signed, in spite of the fact that the original Le Duc was clearly named Duke when he migrated from the hills of Kentucky. But her mother had been of Creole stock, and from the very first the girl's old black nurse had called her Mam'selle, so Mam'selle Violette she became.

Mam'selle Violette lived in a little gray cottage on the main street of the town. Up the street from the cottage there were shops; down the street there were newer dwellings, some white, some yellow, some brown. Therefore Mam'selle Violette's cottage stood on the border line between the shops and the dwellings, and very fitly, for the little gray building was shop and dwelling in one.

But Mam'selle Violette did not call the little front room—wherein were set forth yards of lace in a tiny glass case and painted china on bracketed shelves and pictures on easels—a shop; she called it a studio. It would ill become a granddaughter of Louis Duchesne to keep a shop, but to open a studio was another matter. Moreover, Mam'selle Violette and old Nanan, her nurse, bore a larger relation to the studio than a shopkeeper does to his shop. The lace in the glass case was entirely the product of Nanan's withered fingers, and the pictures, and at least a part of the china, might be credited to Mam'selle's brush. Indeed, on one side of

the room there was a work table filled with bottles and brushes and tubes of color, while in an adjoining closet there was a sheet iron kiln for firing the porcelain after the designs had been laid on. True, the designs were all "transferred" and the pictures were—well, unexcellent; but if Mam'selle was lacking in artistic ability, her customers fortunately did not realize the fact. So the little front room was a studio, and it brought to Mam'selle and to old Nanan the wherewith to live and pay the yearly rent.

Mam'selle's eyes, as may be imagined, were dark. Her cheeks were pale olive with a blush of rose red; her mouth formed a cupid's bow. Mam'selle was twenty-three. Nanan was sixty; her skin was wrinkled, and the once coal-blackness of her countenance had changed to ashen gray. But despite the fact that she was a negress, old Nanan was respected in the town; and the bar sinister that was commonly reputed to lie across Mam'selle's escutcheon detracted nothing from the public esteem for both.

For how could Mam'selle be blamed if one Duke, journeying from the hills of Kentucky, had left his wife behind, and finally forgetting that wife had presumed to marry again—this time the daughter of Louis Duchesne, of Natchez and Baton Rouge? Also, that had been a long time ago—so long, indeed, that Mam'selle Violette knew of her father and mother only what Nanan told her.

Barry Le Duc had made "much moneys," so Nanan said. The big white house that stood on the bluff down at the bend of the river had been

Barry Le Duc's and the plantation Belle Eclair and the-plantation Billy Wiggs. Indeed, had not Madame herself named Belle Eclair, even as Nanan listened, and had not M. Le Duc called the other Wiggs in honor of a red-haired man whom Nanan herself had seen? *Mais oui*—it was even so!

But then when Mam'selle was so tiny—*si petite—comme ça!*—six bare hand-breadths of lace were sufficient to compass her height—the plague of the fever had come creeping up the river, and in one day M'sieu and Madame had both been laid in their graves—yes, in one grave, as husband and wife ought to be laid. And afterward there had come this canard—this story—that there had been another wife, and that Madame—albeit Père Antoine himself had said the words of the marriage ceremony in Nanan's hearing—had been no wife. And then, too, had come a man calling himself M'sieu's brother—a big, fair man—with papers which the lawyers called proofs, as if any proofs could controvert a marriage which Père Antoine had made, and which Nanan had witnessed with her own two eyes!

But the lawyers—*eh, bon Dieu!* what grave, spectacled thieves they were to be robbing a little child!—had agreed with the big, fair man and, since the other woman was also said to be dead, gave everything to him. If there had only been a will, people said—there had been a will, too, for M'sieu Vignaud, at Baton Rouge, had witnessed it. If that will could only have been found, it would have altered matters—certainly it would.

As it was, the stranger took everything—everything save Madame's *dot*. Even would he have taken Mam'selle, also—the robber!—had not Nanan and Père Antoine withstood him so stoutly.

And it really was in some such wise that old Nanan became father and mother both, to Mam'selle Violette. Out of her mother's small patrimony the child had been educated—Père Antoine had insisted upon that—but when the good sisters of the convent had taught her what they could, and would have retained her among them-

selves, she refused to stay, preferring rather to go back to the only home that she knew, and to Nanan. Then, since one must live, she had rented the gray cottage, had moved her mother's old furniture into it, and to Nanan's lace making had added the studio.

Once fairly begun, the enterprise did not fare badly. In the Arkansas town, as in other towns, there were people who talked much of art and of culture in somewhat vague and general terms, and these became the patrons of the studio. Also Mam'selle took a few pupils who came twice a week to paint impossible, six-petaled daisies on back-grounds of ocherish red.

Thus life went smoothly although a bit monotonously for Nanan and Mam'selle Violette. All summer long the wind blew out of the south. All summer long, across the wide, blue, rippling river, came odors of myrtle and of bay and of cloying magnolia bloom. All summer long the yellow sunlight fell from the turquoise sky across the roofs of the wooden houses, transforming these and the dusty street into spots and patches of cloth of gold. And the winters brought little change. There came a touch of frost to the air, perhaps, and the woods turned brown and the green fields russet—these things with bright days of a paler sunshine and gray days of misty rain. For the rest Mam'selle had her work—the slow tracing of the figures on the teapots and steins and punchbowls, the firing of the kiln, the arranging of Nanan's lace.

Sometimes a young man came to buy something, and having made his purchase lingered to watch Mam'selle's brush as it touched, touched, touched the bare surface of the porcelain. Sometimes, too, the watcher grew tired of the brush and allowed his glance to wander to the slim hand above it, the rounded arm, the cupid's bow of a mouth. To all such Mam'selle was courtesy itself. Could she serve m'sieu further? No?

Whereupon "m'sieu" would go away wondering what kind of a queer girl Mam'selle was.

As for the plantation Belle Eclair and the plantation Billy Wiggs and the big white house on the bluff, these were well-nigh forgotten. The house was empty, the plantations leased. When one thought of it, one remembered, of course, that Mr. Duke, brother of M. Le Duc, was now also dead, and that some distant relative had fallen heir to his goods, but who save the tax collector found remembering worth while? Certainly Nanan and Mam'selle Violette had long since lost interest in the matter.

Then one day a stranger drifted into the town—a young man who differed in type from all the young men thereabout. He was clean shaven, his shoulders were square, his figure supple and well-knit and competent. At first he was at the little hotel—this Mr. Marjoribanks; then he took rooms in the house next door to Mam'selle's cottage. From this house to the studio was but a step. In the subsequent investigation of his surroundings Mr. Marjoribanks took that step.

His rooms were too bare, he said. If he might buy a picture now, or a piece of the decorative ware—

Mam'selle served him, the color in her cheeks coming and going under his interested glance, but Nanan eyed him askance—since the time of M. Duke Nanan had been suspicious of big blond strangers.

His selection being made, Mr. Marjoribanks did not at once take his departure. According to her custom in such cases, Mam'selle took up her brush, but the china failed to occupy her entirely. Again and again she found herself stopping to listen to the remarks of this stranger, to answer his questions, to agree that they had become neighbors. All at once, too, the question, "Can I serve m'sieu?" seemed to have become a bald and discourteous expression. Still, there was no need—m'sieu was bowing himself out.

Might he come again—some other day—to look at the remainder of the pictures?

Mam'selle hesitated. "Come again?—But yes, to see the pictures—Cer-

tainly, m'sieu." When Nanan looked at her the color was still coming and going in her cheeks.

"*Ai—ai—ai!*" began Nanan in a low-toned African chant.

Thus the friendship began. In three days Mr. Marjoribanks was back, leaning familiarly against the glass case and talking, while Mam'selle turned a small teacup about and touched, touched, touched it with the colors from her palette. Mr. Marjoribanks had traveled. What things he was telling her of Paris and Rome and of the great pictures and the artists there! Soon the teacup was laid aside and Mam'selle was frankly listening.

"*Ai—ai—ai!*" chanted Nanan, swaying to and fro as her fingers netted the lace. "*Ai—ai—ai!*"

II

Is it wrong to love? That is what Mam'selle was asking herself—is it wrong to love one's friend? If he were only an enemy now! The good sisters with elaboration had made that point clear. Stay, but was he not an enemy? Certainly Nanan would say so, for the white house was his, and the plantation Belle Eclair and the plantation Billy Wiggs.

"Folly—folly—folly!" she chided, laughing lightly between the words at her own transparent sophistry. Then she took up her brush and fell to singing as she worked. It was an old song that she sang—a song that she had found in the dusty pile of her mother's music.

"*Malbrouk*," went the words, "*Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre!*" For Mr. Marjoribanks had gone to Kentucky.

How surprised she had been when she learned who he really was, and how confused he had been when Nanan had bluntly taxed him with the fact that of right his plantation Billy Wiggs belonged to Mam'selle, and his plantation Belle Eclair. But after Nanan had gone to make the coffee, he had come around the end of the work table to the place where she sat and had taken her

hands in his, and she, Mam'selle of the studio, had not resisted him. And so, holding both her hands, he had told her of himself—how poor he had been, and how ambitious, and how this legacy of his relative Duke had made things possible for him and had come as a sort of realization of all his youthful dreams.

Ah, how well Mam'selle could understand him, for she, too, had dreamed. What would not a year in Paris, with the masters of her art, have meant to her—even her, Mam'selle, of the poor little studio?

But he had gone farther. Would not Mam'selle take some recompense from him?—would she not give up the painting?—might he not care for her and for Nanan? And then, when she had shaken her head, he had leaned forward and kissed her.

With her lips pressed against her arm, Mam'selle tried to recall that kiss—she did recall it, for Mam'selle had imagination, and springing up she began dusting certain of the shelves and singing to herself over and over again:

"Malbrouk, Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre!"

For he was coming again—he himself had told her so—to live in the big white house which stood in the bend of the river; and although she had rejected his gratitude Mam'selle knew—ah, well, what did not Mam'selle think that she knew! Too excitedly happy to work with her paints, Mam'selle's instincts turned her to housewifery, so that she with Nanan fell upon the back parlor behind the studio and swept and garnished it.

In one corner of this room there was a table—a thick, heavy table built in two pieces and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. It had been Madame's table, so Nanan said—a wedding gift from Louis Duchesne—but now the brass claws upon which it stood were bent, the screws that held it were loosened, its two sections were almost falling apart.

"So, Madame was used to sit," said Nanan indicating, "so, M. Le Duc. It

was Madame's work table—*Eh bien!* all the old days are gone!"

"It shall be repaired," remarked Mam'selle gravely. "M. Smith in his shop will make it like new."

Then when Nanan had gone back to the studio and her lace, Mam'selle fell a-dreaming. It would be in the white house. There would be a carpet on the floor, and the soft light of a lamp would be shining, and the old table, repaired and rejuvenated, would be beside them. Outside would be the ripple of the river and the moonlight and the shadow, here light, dark there, mottling the green lawn till it looked spotted like a leopard, striped like the great skin of a tiger. And somewhere in the leafy thickets a mocking bird would begin to sing . . . Ah, what a song!—A love song to the starry night!—A slumber song to the great, still earth!—A song that would sink low and lower till it pulsed like a whispered secret through the warm and odorous air.

"Oh, love! Oh, love! Oh, love!" And he would be there, and the table would be their talisman—her mother's ancient wedding gift inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Softly she went to it and laid her hand upon it. Here was a crack, there another—it must be handled gently else it might not be preserved. She would herself take it apart—take it apart to be sent to M. Smith's. Bringing an implement she loosed one screw and then another—what was this? A drawer? Yes, surely a drawer, let into the woodwork so cunningly that one might never have suspected it.

She thrilled understandingly and hesitated a moment in delicious suspense. It had been Madame's table—here, then, was the drawer made for Madame's jewels! Would there be jewels in it? She pressed it open, and in spite of herself gave a little gasp of disappointment. In the drawer there was only a paper—a time-yellowed paper folded and laid away.

She finished getting the table apart before she turned again to her uninteresting discovery. Such papers she had happened upon before—old contracts.

accounts, what not, of her father's. When she did unfold the screed, however, her eyes opened suddenly.

"Why!" she exclaimed; then, "Nanan! Nanan!—Nanan!"

But before the old nurse could answer she had recovered herself. It was her secret—whose but hers? Sometime—ah, sometime when the mocking birds were singing to the night and the rising moon, sometime when the great world was asleep and the blue river mirrored the lambent stars—sometime she would show the paper to *him*. Until then it might wait.

"*Eh, p'tite?*" asked Nanan wondering.

"Nothing," said Mam'selle, "only—only the table had a drawer."

"Yes," said Nanan, "*oui, m' petite,*" as she turned back to her work.

"*Malbrouk,*" sang Mam'selle, "*Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre!*"

III

THE spring passed into summer, the summer into winter, and sometimes Mam'selle sang, sometimes she wept, for Mr. Marjoribanks had never returned. Once he had written—once only—and afterward, long afterward, Mam'selle had ceased to watch the arrival of the mail or to start when a quick footstep fell upon the studio floor. And the roses which once had bloomed so freshly in Mam'selle's cheeks began to fade—poor summer roses were they, the roses of yesterday, bleaching and dying at the touch of the frost.

Of Mr. Marjoribanks people spoke to Mam'selle often.

"You two had become such friends," they said.

And Mam'selle would smile faintly. "Yes," she would answer, "yes."

At last, indeed, Marjoribanks came back, but it was a day or two before he called at the studio.

Mam'selle was looking well, he was glad to see.

"Yes."

"And Nanan?"

Yes, Nanan had been well.

Then Nanan went away and there was

an awkward silence. The man stood toying with his glove, evidently ill at ease, and Mam'selle had taken a brush to make pretense at painting. It was so evident that he wished to be gone, yet Mam'selle looked at him once or twice expectantly.

Finally his cheek flushed.

"Mam'selle Violette—" he began in an oddly stilted tone.

But Mam'selle was on her feet.

"Can I serve m'sieu further?" she asked with impersonal politeness. "No?"

"But, Mam'selle—"

"I must not detain you," said Mam'selle gently. "Good-bye, M. Marjoribanks."

But when he had gone she laid her head in Nanan's lap and began to cry tempestuously. "So wicked—so wicked am I!" she sobbed.

"*Ai—ai!*" sang Nanan, swaying and crooning. "*Ai—ai—ai!*"

The outburst was but momentary, however. The following day Mam'selle fired her kiln; the next she painted, and so the next and the next. It was a week thereafter before the town heard of Mr. Marjoribanks's approaching wedding, a week and three days, to be exact, before the news reached Mam'selle. But if those who told her thought to see the granddaughter of Louis Duchesne wince, they were mistaken—Mam'selle made no sign.

Even when the wedding party had arrived and there had come tenants from plantation Belle Eclair and plantation Billy Wiggs to take part in the merrymakings, Mam'selle sat as usual in the studio, holding in her hand a piece of porcelain which she touched, touched, touched with her brush as she brought out in color the design.

Then night came—a wonderful Southern night, albeit the air was chill. Outside the cottage in the shadows that the moonlight cast a mocking bird was awake and with a burst of melody it sang.

"Oh, love!" it said. "Oh, love! Oh, love! Oh, love!"

But inside Nanan was grumbling. "Had the writing been found, *m' petite,*"

she was saying, "had the writing been found, as it should have been, 'tis you who would have been feasting. And then we two could have gone—oh, so far!—and every day would have been a holiday."

"Yes," answered Mam'selle, "yes," as she took a paper from her bosom and dropped it upon the coals.

Then a flame shot up and the yellow title-page curled outward. On it there was written:

The Last Will and Testament of Barry Duke—Otherwise Known as Le Duc.

Today a little gray cottage yet stands on the main street of the Arkansas town. Up the street from the cottage there are shops; down the street there are dwellings, and away to the left of it the river runs on and on, rippling toward the sea. In the studio that oc-

cupies a small front room there is no lace now, but there are crude pictures still on the easels and painted china stands on the bracketed shelves.

And sometimes on his way between his office and his father's house—the big white house that stands on the bluff—a young man stops to purchase some trifle, for the young man is proud of his town and feels that the studio should be sustained. But, although some day Belle Eclair will be his, and the plantation Billy Wiggs, he is not too proud to stop occasionally to watch Mam'selle's brush as it touches, touches, touches, the bare surface of the porcelain. And, when he does, presently Mam'selle looks up with a startled smile. Then she recovers herself.

"Can I serve m'sieu further?" she asks. "No?"

And the young man goes away.



LOVE'S SEASONS

By MARGARET HUNTER SCOTT

IF spring's glad days are full of bliss,
And sweet as honeyed clover,
I'll never ask for aught but this,
That my love's lips are here to kiss,
And my lips hov'ring over.

If summer skies are blue and wide,
And oft with twilight's gleaming
The sun and moon God's dome may ride,
I'll ask no other lamp beside
My lady's eyes a-beaming.

If autumn whispers earth today,
From yellowed treetops sadly,
I'll leave the golden mound of hay,
Where I have dreamed the world away,
And serve my lady gladly.

If winter comes—with subtle art
I'll woo her still, ne'er fear it!
Her eyes, her lips, each witching part
Of her I'll siege, and win her heart,
With my heart beating near it!

THE TRESPASSER

By W. H. G. WYNDHAM MARTYN

THE three motor cars were crowded. Even in the uncomfortable *mécaniciens'* seats, three of Mrs. Boyd's guests were waiting impatiently for the signal to start for the private bathing beach at the base of the Maine cliffs.

The cause of the delay was the inability of the newly-arrived Roger Inwood to find a seat. Mrs. Boyd looked about her despairingly. She hoped that perhaps some of the younger men might be moved to vacate a place for the young millionaire, not, indeed, for his riches, but because of the admiration his riding, shooting and *savoir vivre* usually awoke in his juniors. Roger, too, looked coldly and severely at his fellow guests, and half shook his head at this lamentable lack of self-sacrifice. He fixed his eye on a young Harvard student who had been particularly flattered by his notice.

The student moved uneasily and half made a motion to rise. But he was instantly pulled back to his seat by the pretty girl at his side. This soft pressure of her hand—and who, being twenty and filled with green hope, could resist the touch of a goddess?—fixed him firmly in his place and filled his brain with wild and surging thoughts. Edith Seymour, during the two weeks he had known her, had hardly noticed him, and now she plainly preferred his company to that of the widely popular Inwood. His former envy for the young millionaire standing disconsolate by the car, gave way to a pity which Inwood saw and resented. How, he thought, could this callow youth know that he and Edith the evening before had indulged in a pretty little quarrel, and that this was

merely one of her modes of punishment?

Mrs. Boyd, racking her brain to think of a means of transport, waxed almost pathetic. "If only," she said, "horses didn't need shoes, you could ride. They've both gone to be shod."

"Why not ride on the bonnet, Mr. Inwood?" demanded Edith Seymour. "I'm sure you'd look awfully amusing bobbing up and down in the forefront of the battle. Do try."

"Thanks, no," replied Inwood. "I rarely ride on automobile bonnets when I am dight in summer garb." He looked at his white flannel suit complacently. "It's selfish of me, I suppose, but I prefer even to run behind invigorated by the exhaust."

"He took the five mile when he was at Harvard," whispered Miss Seymour's companion. He took some pride in this and felt that he could afford to be generous.

"Why not walk?" suggested Mrs. Boyd, brightening. "By the fields, it's only three miles, while the road winds about for ten."

It was not an idea that presented much attraction to Inwood. It had been his intention to effect a reconciliation with Edith Seymour; and now, instead, young Harvard was trying to remember Tennysonian things to pour into her pretty ear. He had quoted Tennyson at twenty, too. But to Miss Seymour, keenly observing, it seemed that Mrs. Boyd's suggestion found instant favor in his sight.

"I should much prefer it to the ride," he said with alacrity. "I'd no idea we were so near the sea. Which way is it?"

Mrs. Boyd proceeded to give minute directions on the minor details and very

scanty information on the necessary points. "And," she said in conclusion, "if you get lost, there'll be someone to tell you. A lot of people will be blackberrying there now."

He waved his *adieux*, lit a cigarette and set out jauntily. By the end of the necessarily slow journey Miss Seymour would be tired of Tennyson maltreated—she had not yet reached the age when women pay deference to boys—and would be in a mood for forgiveness. She was an excellent swimmer—young Harvard was not—and Jim Boyd had told him of a tiny island almost a mile out, where a very pleasant hour might be spent. It cheered him to think of young Harvard watching their heads as together they breasted the waves and left him disconsolate. He grew presently better tempered and had recovered his usually happy mood when he was aware of an elderly man who stood on a mound a couple of hundred yards distant and gesticulated wildly.

"No doubt," mused Roger, "this elderly seeker of berries has lost himself or wants to know the time."

He seated himself on a rock and waited; it did not occur to him to go where the elderly man beckoned. He was the mountain, and it was to be counted to him for amiability that he waited for Mahomet. Mahomet, when he beheld the other's attitude, seemed to grow still more excited and waddled toward Roger briskly; he clenched his fists and spluttered.

Inwood, at peace with the world, became mildly amused and pointed to an adjacent stone.

"Sit down," he observed genially. "Such activity as yours is often fatal to elderly men in August." He looked at him with kindly criticism. "And you aren't built for sprinting, either."

"Are you responsible for my build?" demanded the other wrathfully.

"I?" cried Roger, "Am *I* responsible? My dear man, consider the difference in our ages! Although possessed of vast experiences in men and morals, my birthdays are but twenty-nine."

It was plainly perceptible that, so far from asking peaceable questions, this old gentleman was filled with a consuming wrath. He raised his voice and spluttered in a manner that angered Inwood, who demanded of others the courtesy he was at all times ready to show to them. He lighted a cigarette and smiled upon the other in so frank and amiable a manner that the wrathful Mahomet felt that here was a foe unworthy of his lingual lash. He was to find that Roger Inwood's mildness of manner was often deceiving.

"What," gasped the elderly man with staccato jerks, "what do you want?"

"What do I want?" repeated Inwood meditatively. "Do you know, that's a very interesting subject. As a child, I probably wanted the moon, but now I've come to agree with Aristotle in his 'Nichomachean Ethics,' that 'What the wise man wants is not pleasure, but freedom from pain.'" He beamed kindly upon the red-faced questioner. "That, gentle stranger, is what I want, and represents my attitude toward cosmos. Some day, when I find a newspaper man intelligent enough to interview me, I shall say that as an original thing. It's ten to one no one knows the difference. Now, in confidence, what does life mean to you?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed the old gentleman, with almost incredible rapidity for a score of times, "tut, tut, tut!"

"Very good!" said Inwood when the tut-tutting had ceased. "A very colorable imitation of a motor boat in the distance, but hardly a serious answer to a serious question." He spoke almost reproachfully. "I shouldn't have suspected you of such frivolity. I repeat: what does life mean to you?"

"An affection of the bronchial tubes . . ." began the other.

"Most singular," mused Inwood. "Life means to him an affection of the bronchial tubes!"

". . . has prevented me," cried the other, taking no notice of the interruption, "from saying what I wanted

more fully. You have seized upon my scantiness of breath caused by a half-mile pursuit of you, alternated with much shouting, to insult me by deriding my attitude and calling me a steam yacht."

"Motor boat," corrected Roger gravely. "No reputable steam yacht keeps on tut-tutting."

"If you will permit me," stormed the old gentleman with a satire that was ferocious, "I should like to ask you a question. May I?"

Inwood examined the contents of his silver cigarette case, looked at his watch and assumed an easier attitude.

"I have eight cigarettes, plenty of time and an intense desire to serve my fellow men. Unbosom yourself, my dear sir, as though you conducted a department in a woman's magazine. A winning manner like yours drags all my secrets from me."

"Then," said the other hoarsely, "who may you be?"

Roger turned on his elbow and blew a fragrant ring of blue smoke.

"Your use of the conditional," he answered, "permits me to wander unfettered in the realms of fancy. I *might* be Hannibal crossing the Alps; Alice in the Looking Glass; Nero fiddling while Rome burned; a split infinitive; the Man with the Iron Mask; the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. There are no bounds to the things I *might* be. But your winning manner engenders in me the desire to speak only the truth, and I must confess that I am none of these. Permit me to be more definite: who *are* you?"

The old man clutched at his throat. "Tut, tut," he began.

"Exactly," replied Inwood, "but apart from that, who are you and by what authority do you splutter at me and subject me, an offenseless stranger, to the third degree?"

"My name is Kendon," returned the elderly man, "and I ask what I do by that right which has been sacred since time began—the right of ownership."

"Nay, nay," cried Inwood quickly; "I am ready to forgive your forceful utterances; I am far from grumbling

at your tautological repetition of the expletive, 'Tut'; I listen to your epigrams with delight, but I will not accept you for an owner. Some day I believe I shall be owned body and soul by a beautiful woman, but she won't have your figure or vocabulary."

"He has the impertinence," cried Kendon, apostrophizing the birds that flew overhead, "to suppose that I would attach any importance to his ownership. I referred to the land upon which he trespassed." He turned with renewed ferocity to the trespasser. "This land is mine. It was my father's before me. When I saw you walking over it flicking off the heads of my flowers, I conceived such an instant aversion that, despite the protest of my daughter and my bronchial tubes, I started in pursuit."

"I only decapitated a few dandelions," said Inwood. "Merely dandelions."

"The last of the season and the finest," roared their owner. "I make a syrup of the blossoms. My liver is not what it was, and I rely upon this syrup and upon no other medicament. You have robbed me of some of my syrup, and my daughter is witness. She has gone for two gardeners and a dog."

"I don't collect gardeners or their dogs," said Inwood.

"They'll collect you, sir," said the old man with grim humor. "There's nothing you can say in your favor. You passed a board on which was written that trespassers would be punished with all the rigor of the law."

"I admit it," cried Inwood, "but I had reason to believe that I was walking over the Boyd property."

"The Boyd property, inconsiderable in extent when compared with mine, lies two miles north of us. You have defied the law too long, and I, as a magistrate, will see that you get your punishment. We know all about your escapade of last week."

"Last week?" echoed Inwood. "Why, I only came into Maine, and for the first time, yesterday afternoon."

"A man," observed Mr. Kendon magisterially, "who will willfully destroy

flowers of marked medicinal value, will not stop short of lying. I saw you, myself, two days ago. You have shaved since then and obtained fresh clothes, but the disguise does not deceive me."

"Disguise?" gasped the astounded Inwood.

"You were clad," said the old man, "in a red shirt and ragged brown trousers with a gray patch on them. I particularly observed the patch as you escaped over the wall after having ruined my asparagus bed and stolen my prize apples. You threw the largest of them at me as I called to you."

Inwood listened in bewilderment. There was as little doubt as to this old man's sincerity as there was concerning his own guiltlessness.

"Have you anything to say?" demanded the other.

"No," snapped Inwood irritably, "except that I hope it was hard and hit you."

Confident that he had been on the Boyds' land, he had not given a thought to the possibility that this might make things unpleasant.

He could prove an alibi easily enough and thus escape the charge of apple stealing; but while explaining the matter of unintentional trespass, what amorous couplets were not being showered upon Edith Seymour by the ardent student? He was not, it is true, in love with the girl, but he resented her appropriation by any other man. He was sorry now that he had infuriated the landowner.

"I'd no idea I was trespassing," he said with a more conciliatory air. "I took you for a blackberry picker."

"Blackberry picker—I?" Kendon glared balefully. "Do you know that blackberry seeds go straight to the appendix? Do you suppose that I pick blackberries when I can have dandelions? Pooh!"

"It was accidental, I assure you," Inwood continued, "and if you'll let me know your particular brand of dandelion I'll send you a bushel." He took out his card case. "Meanwhile, here's my card. For two weeks I shall be staying with the Boyds."

Kendon looked at it scornfully.

"What means have I," he asked, "of knowing if this is true? If you are the man I suspect, Mrs. Boyd will be glad to be relieved of you. You probably have as many names as disguises." He looked up triumphantly. "Ah, here is my daughter. She's a witness against you, remember."

Down the hillside, with easy swing and graceful step, came a slim, tall, fair girl, whose deep blue eyes, set in an oval face deliciously tanned by the sun, looked interestedly at the culprit. And the culprit straightway forgot all about the Tennyson-quoting student of Harvard and his Edith. He had never seen such a perfectly pleasing picture of athletic girlhood.

When she was within a few yards of the group her father pointed derisively at the prisoner. "Here he is," he cried. "He calls himself Roger Inwood."

Inwood instantly stepped forward with deferential courtesy and took the astonished girl's hand in his own.

"And you are Miss Kendon," he said, "aren't you? I'm charmed to meet you. Your father and I have been talking about ideals."

"Ideals?" she asked, not understanding.

"We all have them," said Roger, genially. "Mine was to be the adoring slave of a woman who was slim and beautiful and held herself like a goddess."

During this, Mr. Kendon had remained dumb from very indignation. That this impertinent dandelion destroyer should pretend that he had been introduced to Agatha Kendon, one of the greatest heiresses in Maine, took away what breath was left in him. He opened and shut his mouth as does a fish newly drawn from his native element.

The girl still regarded Roger gravely. It seemed that in her clear eyes was a look of reproach, and he became a little ashamed of himself. Never since he had been a schoolboy had Inwood felt less command of himself. She was incomparably beautiful. He felt he must continue the conversation at all costs.

"And your father's ideal," he stammered, "was to be a motor boat."

She looked helplessly at her champion progenitor.

"Pay no attention to him, my dear," cried Kendon, who captured his calmness with a terrible effort. "He's undoubtedly a madman. He thinks he's Hannibal in the Looking Glass, and says he lives in a shoe. But, mad or not, he shall suffer; he shall find that in Maine, unlike New York, we are not swayed by maudlin sentiment. He shall go to jail for theft and for striking me on the nose with an apple I designed for the Portland Horticultural Exhibition."

"I assure you—" commenced the offender.

"Not a word," cried Kendon. "You will find that, although the New York press has chosen to laugh at Maine justices, we are not so far behind the times after all." He came a step nearer and hissed into the younger man's ear. "Where is your red shirt? Where are the trousers upon which, during your retreat, I observed the gray patch?"

He turned in his excitement to his astonished daughter.

"Where" he cried, "are his patched trousers?"

"My dear papa," she answered, "how should I know?"

"We shall find them," he exclaimed, "and we shall connect this robbery with the theft of old Blodgett's geese. By careful investigation we may unearth a plot that will prove to New York Maine is not without intelligence."

While he spoke, two men, accompanied by a hungry-looking mongrel, bore down upon them.

"This," he cried, pointing to Inwood, "is the man who trampled upon your asparagus bed, Conover, and robbed you of possible pomological honors in Portland next month. Here, Blodgett, stands the robber of your father's geese."

"What'll we do with him?" demanded the two men simultaneously. Conover was tall and speedy; Blodgett, shorter and squarer, promised greater

strength. They both seemed to regard him with ill temper. The dog strained at his leash. It was time for Inwood to think and act quickly. The men he could outrun if necessary. The dog was a mongrel of indeterminate breed, and as an owner of thoroughbred stock he felt no confidence in its courage; his malacca cane would keep it at bay.

But there remained the girl. He was keenly sensitive to ridicule; and to run away from a stout landowner, his two gardeners and a mongrel, leaving the most entrancingly pretty girl he had ever met to watch his flight was not to be thought of. What a story to get to his clubs! He could almost hear Ewley of the Knickerbocker repeating it in the smoking room in his acidly interesting manner. There was a man, too, in The Players who would revel in it!

He submitted to his capture with a grace that became him well; there was an air of distinction which awoke a kindlier interest in Miss Kendon's heart. But before Blodgett and Conover laid their coarse hands on his spotless sleeves, he warned the three men that, were his personal liberty curtailed for so much as one second, or were he subjected to any species of assault, their names should ring in every lawyer's mouth the wide States over. But Blodgett, thinking as mournfully of his father's geese as Conover of his ruined asparagus bed and vanished apples, had little regard for the niceties of technical assault. With them assault meant no less than serious bodily injury; and they used a force that was unnecessary in dragging their captive to the house of a justice of the peace who was a close friend of their employer.

This gentleman, being convinced by Kendon's manner that the two gardeners had indeed apprehended a notorious criminal, consigned him without examination to a cell. Like many other magistrates, his zeal for the cause of law led him into many serious disregards of it.

Inwood had been more than two hours in his cramped quarters when a

fellow prisoner was thrust in. He was a tall, good-humored looking man, as bronzed as Inwood himself, but plainly a professional tramp. His apparel awakened considerable interest in the amateur. His shirt had once been a Garibaldi red, and the brown trousers were overlaid in parts by decorative panels of gray tweed. He accepted Inwood's cigarette with evident friendliness.

"Why," asked Roger presently, when the tramp had criticized his new quarters with professional discernment, "why didn't you hurl a rock instead of an apple at the stout old gentleman?"

"So he's the guy that's got you!" laughed the tramp. "Say, the apple hurt him more'n a brick! What's yours—exceeding the limit? He's the feller what fined a New Yorker a thousand dollars for speeding. Say, the papers didn't do a thing to him!"

A few minutes later Inwood was summoned to the magisterial presence. Mr. Crozier, that rural Draco, stated that since he had not stolen the apples Mr. Kendon had consented to overlook the partial destruction of his dandelion crop. Mr. Roger Inwood might therefore depart with all speed and consider himself lucky that no worse thing had befallen him.

It was then that Messrs. Kendon and Crozier experienced their first shock; for Mr. Inwood declined either to be comforted or to depart. He had a very fair knowledge of the law, and used this as a weapon with which to disconcert the magistrates. He pointed out that he had been assaulted at the instigation of Mr. Kendon by men servants in his employ. His soiled coat and a sprained ankle were offered in evidence. He conjured up all the Latin legal phrases he could remember and called the blinking Crozier a *tort feasor* to his face. He accused the unhappy Kendon of dynamical tendencies and announced that his financial condition must be good indeed if he were prepared to spend the money necessary to fight the case from court to court. Inwood freely acknowledged that he could spend a

million on it and still buy a new motor car every week.

He was asked to wait in an adjoining room while this aspect of the case might be discussed.

He limped painfully to the door. "Remember," he said, before he left the room, "that you'll get fined more than a thousand dollars!"

The shot took effect. Night and day Mr. Kendon was tortured by what the motor and general press said about his inordinate fine. He shivered.

Chuckling over the dismay he had engendered, Inwood hobbled into the next room to find Agatha Kendon waiting there.

"I'm afraid," she said, "that you've frightened papa very much. I heard all your legal terms. Aren't you a little revengeful?"

"My heart," he returned, "is as tender as a child's. I am fighting for a principle, not a prejudice. I was assaulted—and you shall be subpoenaed as a witness—and my clothes ruined. I was further accused of doing much evil in your father's garden. And lastly, the details of my supposed wardrobe, details which I shall willingly spare you, were bandied about in a manner that made me exceedingly uncomfortable."

She looked at him closely; from his stern face she could glean nothing. Blodgett had been unnecessarily strenuous, and her father had a genius for the construction of mountains with materials that sufficed merely for mole hills. But for all his eccentricities her father was very dear to her, and she dreaded more publicity on his conception of law. She looked almost timidly at the man opposite her. At that time she had not fathomed his duplicity.

"I came here," Inwood assured her gravely, "to stay with my old friend, Jim Boyd, and his wife. I forswore my promised trip to Scotland so that I could bathe, dance, play tennis and otherwise disport myself. How can a man with a damaged ankle disport himself? And worse than all, I can't bear to be jolted over these rough

roads to the Boyds' house. That wobegone tavern we passed in the village must shelter me for a month."

"Not so long as that, surely," she said.

"Every minute of a month," he replied firmly. "Don't you know that if one neglects a sprained ankle it may have to be amputated? Would you"—there was reproach in his tone—"would you condemn me to live with one foot in the grave? A month at a place like that inn will make me so misanthropic that I shall sue your father for enormous damages."

"I'm sure I'm awfully sorry for what occurred," she responded dismally. "I suppose papa ought not to have been so positive about recognizing you; but his sight is not good. This trouble will make him thoroughly ill."

"Miss Kendon," he said softly, and the tone was so different from what he had used that she looked up at him in surprise, "Miss Kendon, why not be a good Samaritaness and let me spend my convalescence in your father's house? It's not far away, and I know if I were there I should become filled with the milk of human kindness. I see myself," and his voice and manner waxed almost enthusiastic, "playing cribbage with your father and even rising at daybreak to pursue the wily dandelion to his lair. I even see myself finding favor in his sight and never thinking of actions for false imprisonment. I see him regarding me with the affection of a son, or even," he looked at her closely, "a son-in-law."

The girl looked at him, and her voice had a ring of hauteur in it. His magnificent audacity was amusing, but she was not one to be wooed easily.

"I'm afraid," she said, "your flights of fancy conjure up visions that can never be realized." She yawned with an obviousness that was meant to silence him. And, indeed, for the moment he was unable to regain his optimistic outlook; but another look at her made him more determined than ever not to lose his opportunity. Here was a girl who attracted him enormously; her very yawn had a fascination, and her coldness was not without its reas-

suring side. And her slender brown fingers were innocent of the arrogant token of engagement. He had hardly formed a plan of campaign which might help him, when the door opened and her father entered. It was a humbler Kendon, to be sure, but still a man bearing himself with some apparent fierceness. But as Inwood glanced closely at him it seemed that this attitude was merely the landowner's last line of defense. And therein he was right; for Mr. Kendon was prepared to go to great lengths to evade newspaper notoriety.

"This is a very sad business," observed the old gentleman, without apparent reason. "Let it be a lesson to all of us!"

"It wasn't my fault," said Inwood. "You drove me to it."

Kendon's bellicose air dropped from him, and he made a gesture almost of supplication, but the younger man ignored it.

"Yes," he repeated, "you drove me to it by your extraordinary powers of satire and invective. I hardly remember what I said, for your words stung like whips."

Kendon could hardly believe his ears at this frank and seemingly penitent avowal. It was difficult to rid himself of the idea that he had been sent down to lingual defeat, but his native conceit came to his rescue; he had always prided himself upon his sarcasm, and his late wife had referred to it frequently as the one fly in her pot of ointment. But he glanced towards his daughter for her advice or help. Like most obstinate people, he was dependent on another, and with him it was Agatha. She gave no indication of taking any interest in the matter, and turned over the pages of her book.

"We are none of us too old to learn," he remarked. "Perhaps I allowed my satirical ability to wound unduly."

Agatha looked up to see her father beaming with satisfaction as he extended his hand to Roger Inwood.

"It's not a question of satire," she observed unkindly, "but of trespass and damage."

She resumed her reading and her father withdrew his hand. A vision of dandelions decapitated through no declamatory powers of his own floated before him.

"You may not," he said firmly, "have stolen my apples, but you certainly robbed me of a month's supply of dandelion syrup."

"I shall never cease to regret it," said the other, "particularly as I am a great believer in nature's remedies. I don't want to seem rude, but is your splendid health and vigor due to taking this syrup?"

"Young man," replied Kendon, "it is. I am what I am because of it. If in physical prowess I outdo my fellow man or by mental alertness command his respect, it is due to my dandelion elixir."

Inwood gazed at him with admiration. "I wonder if it would do me good?" he mused.

Kendon glanced at him with quickened interest. It was becoming increasingly difficult to get victims for his mixture, and here was a man rushing blindly to the altar of herbal devotion!

"Three doses would put color into your pale cheeks," he cried. "You shall try it!"

"Color!" cried the girl, not looking up. "What does Mr. Inwood want with color? His health seems almost too robust."

"Nonsense," exclaimed her irate parent. "His constitution is unquestionably poor."

She looked up and gave a little cry of surprise, for the pain of his hurt had brought unaccustomed pallor to his face.

"What is it?" she demanded quickly. "Was it true about your ankle? I thought you were joking. Oh, it must hurt you horribly!"

She sprang to her feet. "Sit down, father," she turned to the bewildered Kendon; "that wretched Blodgett sprained Mr. Inwood's ankle, and we're occupying the only chairs in the room."

"Really," said Inwood hastily, "it isn't serious; if you'll send to the Boyds' I'll be very grateful."

"I won't hear of it," snapped Mr. Kendon. "It's four miles over bad roads to their house, while mine is at hand. You must come as my guest; on that I insist. Maine," he concluded pompously, "may lack some things, but hospitality is not one of them. I have often commented on Blodgett's clumsiness and the size of his feet. I'll 'phone to the stables for a carriage."

He paused with his hand on the door. "I have observed," he remarked, "that even in the case of sprains my syrup gives the system the necessary tone to insure quick recovery."

He went happily from the room and his daughter, her elbows on the table, looked across at the invalid with a mischievous smile.

"It's awfully nasty," she said. "The most bitter and bilious compound ever known. It accounts for the alienation of all of our friends and most of our relatives."

"They weren't worthy of you," he cried.

"The dose is two tablespoonfuls before meals. There's no escape, because he watches that you sip it slowly and thoroughly. Don't you feel frightened?"

"I understand," he answered, "the exaltation of martyrdom. I look forward to my sufferings with delight."

"But martyrs looked for crowns," she said innocently.

He looked at her steadily and with an admiration that no longer offended.

"So do I," he answered softly.



WHEN pleasure becomes a habit, it ceases to be a pleasure.

MRS. MOLLY

By RACHEL CROTHERS

CHARACTERS

MRS. CHARLES BROWN (*a very young wife*)
MR. CHARLES BROWN (*her young husband*)
MRS. MOLLY MIFFLIN (*her very old friend*)

TIME: *The present—a September night.*

PLACE: *Suburban home of the Browns.*

SCENE—*Boudoir in a summer cottage. There is a wide window at right, prettily draped in white. A large fireplace in center with a high wood mantel, holding a clock and a few effective ornaments. A bright wood fire is burning. To the left of fire a couch, draped in light material and heaped with delicate pillows. An armchair at right of fireplace. An elaborate toilet table, holding handsome brushes, mirrors and bottles, is at right, with a frail chair before it. A woman's desk, open and showing a profusion of writing materials, is at left, with chair before it. A large square table holding books, magazines and newspapers; a large box of chocolates—opened, and a workbasket showing an elaborate piece of embroidery. Several chairs are about the table—carelessly placed, and a garden hat covered with large pink roses is hung over the one at right of table. A round table at right of window holds a large blooming plant. The chairs and tables are of wicker with cushions of delicate cretonne. The desk and toilet table are of light wood. The woodwork of the room is white and the general effect that of airy, feminine luxury. There are side lights of electric bulbs, and a softly shaded lamp on the table.*

(At curtain, FLORENCE is sitting at her toilet table, brushing her hair; she wears a pretty morning gown. She is a small, blonde and extremely feminine woman, and speaks in a childish, fretful way.)

FLORENCE (*brushing and yawning*)
Molly must be having a pretty good time. It's twelve o'clock. Oh, I'm so sleepy! I wish she'd come. I can't go to bed without hearing about the dinner. (*Turning herself from side to side admiringly.*) Oh, I can't keep my eyes open any longer! (*With a long yawn*

she rises and goes to the window.) How quiet the house is! This is a nice way to spend one's birthday. My guest at a dinner; my husband—heaven knows where, and I alone, waiting. I wonder if I'll ever get to be like other women and accept invitations without my husband? No, I never, never shall.

Oh, Charlie, Charlie! I shall just die if you don't love me. (*Leaning her head against the window. There is a rat-a-tat-tat at the door.*)

FLORENCE

Oh, goody! Yes, Mrs. Molly, come. (*She starts forward eagerly.*)

MOLLY (*throwing open the door from the hall*)

Hello there! (*Mrs. Molly MIFFLIN is a clever, up-to-date woman of the world; keen, funny, lovable—a big heart and generous nature with a strength and tenderness usually hidden.*)

FLORENCE (*going to MOLLY and kissing her cheek*)

I thought you were never coming.

MOLLY

Why, it's early. I simply ate and ran. Not that there was much to eat. I never knew Mrs. Cox to give you enough—that's why she can give so many dinners, I suppose. I'm hungry now. Got anything about? (*She throws off her coat and begins taking off her long gloves.*)

FLORENCE

No, nothing. I'll ring for something.

MOLLY (*who has gone to table*)

What's this? (*taking up a large box of candy*). Chocolates. This will do.

FLORENCE

Oh, no! I'll have something brought.

MOLLY (*selecting a chocolate carefully*)

I'd rather have this, really. Chocolate is extremely nourishing.

FLORENCE

Sha'n't I give you something loose to put on? So you can be comfortable?

MOLLY

I'm just as comfortable when I'm tight, thank you. (*She walks to the dressing table and looks at herself in the mirror—still holding the box of candy, from which she eats with evident enjoyment.*) I ought to be—at forty-five dollars a pair.

FLORENCE

Oh! Do you pay as much as that?

MOLLY (*turning about to look at herself*)

Of course I do. Don't I look it? I'd go without shoes to have these.

FLORENCE

Charles thinks it's extravagant to

pay so much. He says he doesn't see where it comes in.

MOLLY (*smoothing her gown over her figure*)

But he ought to see where it comes out.

FLORENCE (*laughing*)

Well, who was there?

MOLLY (*sitting at the toilet table*)

Oh, nobody. Such a mixture! All misfits. One of those ghastly affairs where everybody was invited because they had to be. I went in with a man I almost married ten years ago, and it made me uncomfortable. (*She takes up a hand mirror and looks at herself critically.*) Now tell me honestly, Florence, I haven't any of those horrid little giveaway lines behind the ears, have I?

FLORENCE (*sweetly*)

W-e-l-l, not any more than you ought to have, dear.

MOLLY

Mew! Sp't! Sp't! (*Imitating a cat spitting and scratching.*) That was worthy of a perfectly good cat. That's the worst of dinners—people are so close to you. Mrs. Cox is so hopelessly old herself that she doesn't care, so she always has the lights as ruthlessly bright as possible for other women.

FLORENCE (*laughing*)

What about the man? Did you regret him?

MOLLY

Heavens, no! But I'm afraid he didn't me, either. I'm sure we were both thinking every minute, "What an escape!" He's grown learned and dull. But at the last he managed to say, after he had had champagne enough, "The back of your neck always was the prettiest part of you." And when I answered, "So far as you know, it always was," he said, "That is my misfortune—" which wasn't bad, was it?

FLORENCE

I should call it *very* bad.

MOLLY

I think, after all, I'll try my hair low. It sacrifices the contour, but it's younger. (*She takes up a comb and fusses a little with her hair.*)

FLORENCE

What about the women? Who were they?

MOLLY

Oh, horribly slow! I couldn't tell one of my best stories. (*She puts down comb and takes up rouge.*) Tut, tut, tut! You haven't come to this! Oh, Florence!

FLORENCE

Oh! Put that away! For goodness sake, do! I didn't know I left that out. I wouldn't have Charlie see it for the world. I—I—just thought I'd try a tiny—tiny bit. I'm getting so pale. Charles likes a little color, you know.

MOLLY (*opening the drawer of the toilet table and putting the rouge in*)

Yes, most men like a little red paint, but not on a woman's cheek. (*She takes a paper from the toilet table, and goes to the couch by the fire, where she throws herself full length.*) The fire feels good tonight, doesn't it? September! Just think of it! And we'll soon be going back to town. I'm always glad when the time comes. Why don't you throw away the rouge and all the rest of the rotten artificiality of this sort of life, and try to get hold of something real?

FLORENCE

Why don't you?

MOLLY (*shrugging her shoulders*)

Oh, you're young enough to break away. Look at us here in this paper—full of our fads and our follies. Is it any wonder we get into mischief? We haven't anything else to do. There was a new Mr. and Mrs. Somebody there tonight to fill your places, and I heard her saying, "I hear the married women here don't distinguish between their own husbands and anybody else's." But she needn't worry. I don't think anybody will get mixed up with hers. Oh—ho, hum! (*She laughs a little and retires into the paper, holding it up so that her face is hidden.*)

FLORENCE

Were there any pretty gowns? (*MOLLY, reading, doesn't hear.*) Molly!

MOLLY (*from behind the paper*)

Uh?

FLORENCE

Were there any pretty gowns?

MOLLY

Um—well enough as gowns go.

FLORENCE

Was Mrs. St. Vincent's as low as usual?

MOLLY

As low as possible, you mean. I thought as I looked around the table, the cut of a gown is like everything else—it takes a very clever woman to know where to draw the line.

FLORENCE

So I didn't miss much?

MOLLY

No, you didn't miss much. Though I wished you were there, of course. You must have had a very gay evening, here all alone. (*FLORENCE begins to cry.*) Here—here, now! None of that. You're a foolish child. Three years of your husband's devotion has spoiled you. Your honeymoon has been too long. The sooner a woman realizes that her husband is just like all other men—the better for her. The first shock is rather a cold plunge, but it takes away the fever of sentiment and brings out common sense.

FLORENCE (*weeping quietly*)

But my husband was different. He was the most devoted man that ever lived, until this—this girl came along and stole him away from me.

MOLLY

Yes, that's what we all think. Let me give you a pointer. He was very willing to be stolen, or she couldn't have done it.

FLORENCE

You don't know Charles. She must be a bad, wicked woman.

MOLLY

Oh, bosh! She's pretty and good-natured, and you're jealous, and he's bored—that's the whole story. It happens every day; and you're making a tragedy of it instead of accepting it as one of the natural symptoms of married life.

FLORENCE (*becoming a little hysterical*)

But you—you don't know—the worst part of it. You don't know how bad it really is. I wasn't going to tell you. I've been saying all day, "I won't tell—I won't tell—I'll keep it to myself and

bear it alone"—but I *must* tell you. (FLORENCE rises and goes to sofa. Taking a sofa cushion, she throws it on floor by sofa and sits upon it, bowing her head upon MOLLY's arm.)

MOLLY

Hold on. Just because it's midnight and you feel confidential, don't tell me things you wouldn't have told me at ten o'clock this morning.

FLORENCE

Don't laugh at me.

MOLLY

And remember, before you give me your confidence, that the man you're talking about is your husband.

FLORENCE

But I—

MOLLY

Better wait until morning.

FLORENCE

No, I want to tell you. I want to tell you now. I want you to know. I want you to help me. I need your help.

MOLLY (*tenderly*)

That's different. (FLORENCE tries to speak, but puts her head down, sobbing again.) Tut, tut, tut! Don't make your nose red. You won't be effective and I sha'n't be sympathetic.

FLORENCE

Just wait until you hear and you'll think I've cause to weep.

MOLLY (*kindly*)

Well, I'm waiting.

FLORENCE (*sobbing again*)

Oh, it's so awful! I can't bear to tell you. I've kept on hoping it wasn't so, but I'm sure now.

MOLLY

Well, hurry. I'll hold on to the sofa and be ready for the shock.

FLORENCE

A week ago I found a bill for a pearl ring in Charles's pocket and I was so happy; for today was my birthday. I've waited all day for him to give me the ring—but he didn't. He never even kissed me or congratulated me or told me I was pretty—so of course he's given the ring to her. Isn't it horrible—horrible—horrible. . . . (She sobs hysterically.)

MOLLY (*impatiently*)

Nonsense! In the first place, you

shouldn't have been looking in your husband's pockets. "Harm watch, harm catch." In the second place, because your husband happens to be flirting a little with Gertrude Holbrook, and because you happen to find a bill for a pearl ring in his pocket, and because he happens to have forgotten your birthday, doesn't prove anything. Perhaps he thinks it's next week or next month.

FLORENCE

You don't know Charles. He never has forgotten it. Something is wrong. He doesn't love me any more. He hasn't kissed me for two days. I can't bear it any longer. I have written a long letter to mother tonight and told her I'm going home. There's nothing else to do.

MOLLY

Home? You mean for a visit?

FLORENCE

I mean forever.

MOLLY (*rising*)

Three years of comfortable happiness; this is the first time you've doubted Charles—the first snag you've struck, and you talk about going home to mother as though you'd been out for a little holiday and were tired and going back. You don't seem to realize that you've married the man—*married!* Don't you know what that means?

FLORENCE

You're the last woman in the world I expected to hear say that. Why, you did it yourself!

MOLLY (*starting as though FLORENCE had struck her, and walking away*)

Ah, that's different.

FLORENCE

Why is it different? I thought you believed in independence and thought a woman must keep her pride and her freedom above all things. (She sobs so she can scarcely speak, and is extremely childish.)

MOLLY (*walking restlessly from right to left. FLORENCE still sits on the floor, leaning back on the sofa, her hair falling over her shoulders.*)

So I do. But if you think she gets her pride and her freedom through her divorce, you never were more mistaken.

Why, you've just begun—just begun to live. Don't think of giving up. What have you done since this flirtation began? Nothing but pout and show how jealous you are. You'll never get him back that way—any fool knows that.

FLORENCE (*rising and throwing herself into the armchair by the fire opposite sofa*)

You're hard and unjust to me—and I came to you for sympathy and help. It's just because I knew about you—and—and your trouble; just because everybody said you did the right thing; just because you are so jolly and independent and happy—that I decided to do it. You're very strange to speak to me like this when you have gone through the same thing yourself.

MOLLY (*softly*)

Yes, I've gone through—that's why I'm saying it. Let's not go back to that. The world, the law and the Church were on my side. I was *sure*. There was no doubt. I tried to find one little doubt to cling to—but there was none. I did it for the one great reason—at least, it *seemed* great then.

FLORENCE

And now?

MOLLY

And now it seems very small. Some other woman has married him and they seem to be pulling along together. We might have done the same, if I had only waited—if I had only forgiven.

FLORENCE

Forgiven? You? Molly, I'm surprised—I'm shocked.

MOLLY

Are you? What have I gained? What have I done for myself? There is so much to forgive—why not *everything*? "For better, for worse," you know, Florence.

FLORENCE

Yes, but not if worse is going on forever.

MOLLY

But that's just it. What is worse? To have gone on suffering and trying to bring him back couldn't have been worse for me than what has come since. Oh, if you knew the sound of the word

divorce—divorcée! I shall never cease to hear it in the wheels of the cars—in the wind at night. And when my boy looks into my eyes and says, "Johnny Smith's father bought him a gun. Where's my father?" (*Her voice breaks. She stops in her walk and goes slowly to FLORENCE.*) Oh, my dear little girl, even if you *knew*, even if it were *true* and not merely a shadow, put your shoulder to the wheel and go on. Make something strong and decent out of your life—even if it is all on your side—and don't begin to think of running away at the first hard place. He's your baby's father—don't forget that. Why, what do you suppose the rest of the world cares whether you're happy or not? You needn't think if you throw this up you'll find anything better around the corner. (*MOLLY goes on in her restless walk, almost forgetting FLORENCE.*) Why, we're just like ships sailing out, and the heart is the captain of the ship. Sometimes there's sun and smooth water all the way. Sometimes out of a clear sky a little cloud comes, and it grows—and grows—until the storm strikes the ship and shakes and beats it. But the captain *hangs on*, and the ship comes through—perhaps *shaken* and scared—but it *comes through*. That's what I didn't do—I *didn't hang on*. We can't all have the love and the sun—no matter how much we may want it. But there's one thing we can *have*, and *keep*, and *die* for, and that is—we can be *true to ourselves*. *Hang on*—do *your part*—and then—if it comes to smash—you've done the best you knew. That's the only way peace comes. We can't get it by running away from something, or pushing someone out of our lives—no matter how big the excuse may be.

(*MOLLY has been walking up and down as she says this, shaken by an emotion she is unable entirely to control. FLORENCE has listened, awed by something she does not comprehend. FLORENCE stands alone a moment when she stops speaking, and then goes to MOLLY, touching her timidly.*)

FLORENCE

Why, Molly, there are tears in your

eyes. Forgive me, dear. I didn't know you cared. I thought you were glad to be free. Would you really like to go back?

MOLLY (*softly*)

I should really like to go back. There never will be anybody else. It's forever, dear, forever.

(*The two women put their cheeks together, and are silent.*)

FLORENCE (*after a pause*)

Poor Mrs. Molly! And I thought you were so jolly and independent.

MOLLY (*bitterly*)

Uh! Independent, yes. I'm only Mrs. Molly. A married woman without a husband. And how am I going to explain it to my boy when he's old enough to ask?

FLORENCE

But you always seem so happy.

MOLLY

Just because I'm usually making a monkey of myself for somebody's amusement doesn't mean that I'm not lonely. Why, I would give my life to stand at the window in the evening with my boy and wait for his father—even if he were a very bad father. Don't you understand? (*She gives FLORENCE a hug and a pat and pushes her away.*) Now I'm not going to preach any more. Just come out of your corner and stop pouting. Be cheerful above all things. If you go on looking as doleful at breakfast as you have lately, of course he's going to take Gertrude Holbrook to drive instead of you. She's new and good-natured.

FLORENCE

Of course she's good-natured—she hasn't anything to be ill-natured about.

MOLLY

How do you know? She has a big enough nose, heaven knows, to worry her. Any girl who can go through life smiling, with that encumbrance, must have *some* good in her.

FLORENCE (*more cheerfully*)

Her nose is pretty big, isn't it?

MOLLY

Pretty big, yes.

FLORENCE (*going quickly to the toilet table to look at her nose*)

My nose isn't bad, is it? Charles

used to say he thought it extremely delicate. But now— (*She sighs.*)

MOLLY

Well, you can't expect him to go on talking about the delicacy of your nose all his life. Give him something else to think about. Find somebody to flirt with yourself. It's a very old scheme, I confess, but it usually works. Take young Alexander—he'll do. Harmless and susceptible.

FLORENCE

Oh, Molly, I couldn't!

MOLLY

Oh, couldn't you? Get a pearl ring yourself—a paste one will do—and let Sir Charles do a little guessing.

FLORENCE

What? Oh, horrible! I couldn't.

MOLLY

Anything for excitement. But all the while you're playing your little game on the side, don't forget to flirt with your own husband a little, my dear. That's what most women do forget.

FLORENCE

I shouldn't know how. He knows I never did and never could and never shall love anybody else in the world but him.

MOLLY

That's just where you make your mistake. Men are just like racehorses; they're much better off a little under feed. He wants most what he can't have. Doubt—doubt, my dear Florence, is the most fascinating thing in the world. A famous old beau once said to me, speaking of another woman, "She was the most fascinating woman I have ever known, because I was never quite sure whether she was good or bad, and I never quite dared to find out." See?

FLORENCE

I'm not deep, nor clever. I just want him to love me.

MOLLY

He does—he does—he does! He's a dear, good boy, and you ought to thank your lucky stars you drew him. Why, he hasn't any really bad points. Doesn't drink to speak of. Doesn't—

FLORENCE

Of course he doesn't. He's never been intoxicated in his life. Do you think for a minute I'd have married him if he had? Why—why—if I should ever see him under the influence of liquor—that—that would be the end of everything. I'd go home at once. That's one thing I do know of Charles.

MOLLY (*trying not to laugh*)

Well, I'm glad. Don't begin to look for anything else now. So brace up—be cheerful, and it will all come out in the wash.

FLORENCE

Oh, if he would just be himself again—once—just kiss me and say something nice, I'd forgive him in a minute. But he doesn't love me. He doesn't—he doesn't—he doesn't! Why, he hasn't asked me to sing for two weeks.

MOLLY (*hiding a smile*)

Oh, well, my dear child, you mustn't expect too much. Charles is human, you know.

(*A faint, cheerful whistling is heard outside.*)

FLORENCE

Listen! There he is now. He's whistling. How strange! He'll wake the baby. (*They listen. The whistling grows louder.*) Why, I think that's very peculiar.

(*Both women sit watching the door. The whistling grows still louder and still more cheerful, and at last the door is thrown open and CHARLES enters. He is an average man, of about thirty-six. He is in evening clothes, and his topcoat is thrown over his arm, his high hat, which he is a trifle slow in taking off, a little back on his head. Two fingers of one glove are on; he carries the other. He has dined too well, but it is evident only in an exaggerated cheerfulness. MOLLY sees at once, but FLORENCE is absolutely unsuspecting.*)

CHARLES

Well, girls, how are you?

MOLLY

We're all right. How are you?

CHARLES

Never was better! Never was better!

FLORENCE

Why did you whistle, Charles? You'll wake the baby.

CHARLES

Why did I whistle? I whistle because I'm happy. Why else? (*MOLLY is intensely amused, but in an agony of fear lest FLORENCE should suspect.*)

FLORENCE (*haughtily*)

Happy? I'm glad you are. I can't say—

MOLLY (*quickly*)

We're all happy. Florence has just been saying how much she has to be thankful for, and how many blessings she has to make her happy.

CHARLES

Good! That's right! That's the proper spirit. My wife used to be a rum good sort, but she's getting a little slow, lately—a little—

MOLLY

Oh, I don't know! Some people don't think she's so slow. If you knew what some of her devoted admirers say about her you wouldn't call her slow.

FLORENCE

Why, Molly, you know—

MOLLY (*to CHARLES*)

You're the slow one.

CHARLES (*looking at FLORENCE*)

What's this? Something going on behind my back, eh?

MOLLY (*getting behind CHARLES and motioning frantically to FLORENCE to carry it out*)

Oh, no. Not behind your back. Right under your nose. You're blind—that's all.

FLORENCE (*beginning to weep*)

You don't love me any more—and I know it.

CHARLES

Not love you? Why, my love, you wrong me. It pains me deeply to see you wrong me.

MOLLY

So she just flirts a little for consolation. You surely don't mind that, do you? If you don't love her—somebody else does.

FLORENCE

Why, Molly, you—

CHARLES

My darling, you are breaking my heart. I'll kneel at your feet as I used to do in the glad old days. (*He does so cautiously*) and ask you if you love me. Do you?

(FLORENCE is about to throw her arms about his neck, but MOLLY, in pantomime, stops her.)

FLORENCE (*restraining herself*)

I—I—don't know. You make me very unhappy.

CHARLES

How can that be—when you are the light of my—of my—

MOLLY

Eyes.

CHARLES

Eyes. Thank you, Mrs. Molly. Strange I forgot eyes. Eyes, my love—you have such beautiful eyes.

FLORENCE

Why, you're so strange tonight, Charles.

MOLLY

I suppose it's hard to speak before me, dear. But he might as well, since it happened to come out. Go on, Charles—don't mind me. You were saying—

CHARLES

Yes, I was saying—eh, now, just what was I saying?

FLORENCE (*crying*)

Oh—you—don't—you don't—you don't love me, or you never could forget!

MOLLY

Why, Charles, I didn't know you were shy before. Hurry and say it and be done with it. You're so horribly sentimental. Tell her you adore her, that you love her better than all the rest of the world put together. I don't mind.

CHARLES

Yes, that's it—that's it—I love you, old girl. You know that, don't you? I love you more than tongue can tell—I love you more than pen can—

MOLLY (*putting her hands over her ears*)

Oh, I say, that will do, you lovesick pair. I never saw anything like you. Aren't you *ever* going to get over it? Hurry and kiss her and get through.

CHARLES

Will you kiss me, my love?

FLORENCE (*throwing her arms about his neck in response to MOLLY's signal*)

Of course I will. (*He kisses her daintily and foolishly.*)

MOLLY

I know I'm horribly *de trop*, but I haven't finished something I was telling Florence. I must finish it before I sleep tonight. Now do run along to bed like a good boy, Charles.

CHARLES (*getting carefully to his feet*)

Tell me too, Mrs. Molly.

FLORENCE (*helping CHARLES up*)

What's the matter, Charles? You're as stiff as an old man tonight?

MOLLY (*choking with laughter*)

No wonder, after eight sets of tennis. Now do go along—*please*. Don't you know when you're not wanted?

CHARLES (*going toward MOLLY*)

I want to hear the joke. What is it you're going to tell? I bet I know—it's about Mrs. Sneed and young—

MOLLY

Hush, get out! Nothing of the kind. Now will you—

CHARLES (*looking at her admiringly*)

That's a pretty dress, Mrs. Molly—what there is of it.

FLORENCE (*shocked*)

Why, Charles!

MOLLY

If I'd had to pay for any more I'd have been bankrupt.

CHARLES

You're a jolly girl, Molly.

FLORENCE

Why, Charles! You're so strange tonight. You never called her Molly before.

CHARLES

Strange? Am I strange, Molly?

MOLLY

No. I think you're very familiar.

CHARLES

That's not bad. You're all right, Molly. (*He laughs.* FLORENCE and MOLLY laugh a little too, but CHARLES keeps on.)

FLORENCE

Why, Charles, you're silly. I don't see anything to laugh at.

MOLLY

Why, don't you? I think it's awfully funny. (*Stopping suddenly.*) I wonder if you could get me a glass of water, Charles. I'm so thirsty.

CHARLES

Water? Water—what do you want with water? I'm thirsty, too. I'm glad you mentioned it.

FLORENCE

Charles, get her a glass—all the servants are in bed.

MOLLY

I'll tell you what—let's go down. Come on, Charles. I'll go with you and we'll see what we can find.

CHARLES

Sure. That's it—we'll see what we can find. You're a jolly girl, Molly. I used to know a song called "Molly."

(*He sings*)

Oh, Molly was a little lady—

Oh, Molly was a little shady—

MOLLY (*quickly*)

Oh, that isn't the way it goes. I remember it perfectly.

(*She sings*)

Molly was a pretty girl,

With laughing eyes and teeth of pearl.

CHARLES

Not at all—

(*Sings*)

Oh, Molly was a little lady—

Oh, Molly was a little shady—

Oh, Molly . . .

(*MOLLY sings anything she can to drown CHARLES's words.*)

FLORENCE (*laughing innocently*)

Oh, you funny people! You're not on the same key.

MOLLY

Now come on and get out. I can't sit up all night.

(*She walks with him toward the door.*)

CHARLES

Well, anything to please the ladies. Good night, ladies. Good night. (*He blows a kiss to FLORENCE.*)

FLORENCE

Good night, Charlie, dear.

(*CHARLES takes a dance step or two, holding out the tails of his coat.*)

FLORENCE (*laughing*)

Why, Charles, I never saw you so silly.

CHARLES (*still stepping*)

Am I silly? Am I silly, Molly?

MOLLY

No, I don't think so.

CHARLES

Dance a little, Molly. There's a good girl.

FLORENCE

Why, Charles!

MOLLY

With pleasure. Why not?

(*CHARLES has gone to the door to go out, but the dancing brings him away from it again, and MOLLY, in order to get him back to the door without letting him realize it, and also in order that FLORENCE may not think CHARLES too silly, dances with him and leads him back to the door.*)

FLORENCE (*out of breath*)

Oh, you funny people! I never saw anything so silly.

(*CHARLES dances very carefully, turning out his toes and bowing profoundly. He is not in the least noisy or vulgar, but very silly and good-natured.*)

CHARLES

You're leading me a dance, aren't you? But I'm all right. I'm coming along all right, eh, Molly?

MOLLY (*laughing*)

You certainly are!

FLORENCE (*laughing*)

Well, Molly, I wouldn't have thought it. If anybody else but you and Charles were doing this I wouldn't think it was very dignified.

(*MOLLY gets CHARLES to the door once, but he—enjoying himself immensely—dances away from it again, and then—purely in fun—stoops and kisses MOLLY. FLORENCE, who has been laughing happily, stops suddenly and rises in anger.*)

FLORENCE

I think you have gone too far.

(*She walks indignantly out of the room, through door at right. As soon as she closes the door, MOLLY slaps CHARLES on the cheek with a vigorous slap. He starts suddenly—straightens himself and looks at her in amazement.*)

MOLLY (*in a low voice*)

You're tight. Pull yourself together and get out of this mess. You're deliberately making her miserable, all because of a very ordinary girl whom you don't care the least bit about. She

thinks the worst possible things and is breaking her heart over it—talking divorce and all the rest. Oh, you needn't look insulted and amazed. I beg your pardon for slapping you. It was the easiest way. Seems to have been effective—you look more intelligent already. Don't think me presumptuous and interfering, old man. I do it because I care. She's a dear little girl and deserves all you can give her. Don't be a fool. Brace up! I don't think you meant any real harm—but *she* does and it hurts. There's something about a pearl ring and today was her birthday, and she says you—

CHARLES

Tomorrow.

MOLLY

No, today. If she's willing to acknowledge her birthday, you ought to be.

CHARLES

By Jove, it can't be! I got the ring, you know, but I was waiting for tomorrow.

MOLLY

Thank God! You're not a bad sort, after all. (MOLLY gives CHARLES a quick, impulsive shake.) I'll bring her out and you just mention the ring—that you lost a day, and so on; she'll do the rest. And I say, old man, don't—don't let her see you like this again. She didn't know this time, bless her innocent heart! but she will the next. It doesn't take long. If you've been fortunate enough to marry a woman as innocent as that—for heaven's sake try to keep her so. They don't grow on bushes. Oh, you men, if you only knew how easy it is to make us happy—surely—surely you'd never do anything else.

CHARLES

What have I done?

MOLLY

Oh, that girl, you know. Cut it—

drop it. It isn't worth it. There's nothing in it. Pull together, whatever comes. I *know* what it all means.

CHARLES (taking her hand)

Yes, by Jove, that's true. You do know. You're a brick, M—M— (He starts to say "Molly," but hesitates.)

MOLLY

Say it—"Molly."

CHARLES

Thank you, Molly. Thank you a thousand times. I've been an awful ass, haven't I?

MOLLY (smiling)

You certainly have. I have to make my peace with her now. Just wait and I'll bring her out. (She starts.)

CHARLES

By the way—what shall I say? How much did I—

MOLLY

Oh, nothing! You really behaved very well—under the circumstances. But don't let it happen again. I warn you. Just mention the ring and tell her you love her.

(She goes out quickly and CHARLES is left alone. He stares before him a moment.)

CHARLES

She's a brick. That man threw away an awful lot when he let Mrs. Molly go. Charles, my boy, I think you've been a very large fool.

(MOLLY opens the door and brings FLORENCE in. FLORENCE is weeping and MOLLY pushes her into CHARLES's arms and goes to the door, where she turns.)

MOLLY

Your little world lies there—in each other's arms. Nobody else cares. I know—I know.

(She goes out softly, closing the door after her. CHARLES, holding FLORENCE in his arms, stoops and kisses her.)

CURTAIN



"MORALITY" is your way of living my life.

March, 1909—8

THE DAUGHTER OF A PASHA

By MARY HASTINGS

WILDER rose from the long and lonely dinner at the Luxor with the conviction that of all pleasures traveling was the least endurable, and that earth held no solitude like unto the solitude of a great hotel. He ordered a carriage and drove out to see Karnak by moonlight.

Scorning all guides, he wandered about the ruin at will, refusing to vex his mind with the identification of temple or treasure chamber, but absorbing lazily the immense impression of the whole—the vast lines of wall, the eye-lifting obelisks, the giant stone kings, each with his secret, impenetrable smile, the huge columns that flung such broad bars of black across the roofless, moon-filled court. The moon did more than restore a past grandeur to the place; it flooded it with a peculiar glory, and struck to strange, enchanted beauty the desolation of the empty temples and silent halls.

Presently, his solitary exploration palling, Wilder took a seat in a shadowy corner and began to smoke. It was early and other tourists infrequent, so he had abundant leisure to notice the girl in white who flitted past with her dragoman. What he noticed was not so much the girl as the way the guide hushed her light chatter with a sharp, "You are speaking too loud," just as they passed him.

Why, Wilder wondered, shouldn't the girl speak loudly if she wished—and what business was it of her guide's, anyway? By and by he began to poke about the place again, rather hoping for another glimpse of the pair. But fresh arrivals distracted his attention,

and he had quite forgotten about the girl when he turned a corner into a small chamber and found her there.

She was full in the moonlight before a tremendous old Rameses, her dark head tilted to one side in bird-like contemplation. At his step she started, and—so he somehow became aware as he discreetly gazed upon a similar Rameses—transferred her scrutiny to him. Then things happened.

For the dragoman sped into the place like a flying Mercury and hissed an Arabic sentence at the girl. Even to Wilder's untutored ears the whisper breathed fear in every syllable. The girl gave a little gasp, a sort of mental flutter, and whirled about to Wilder.

"Monsieur, you are English—there is no time to explain. Will you have the kindness to put your arms about me? Embrace me, monsieur; do not let me be seen!"

And without waiting for any form of consent, she precipitated herself upon him, burying her face on his shoulder. Mechanically his two very surprised arms went around her, and in this somewhat rigid yet apparently tender attitude he met the gaze of the two people for whom this performance seemed designed—a gray-haired Englishman and a tall, dark-eyed man in evening dress who wore the red fez of the Turk. These two appeared a moment in the doorway, murmured a simultaneous something, half surprise, half apology and altogether amusement, and politely withdrew.

The girl raised her head, listening intently. The dragoman stole from his dark corner to the doorway, muttered something and slipped away.

With a tremulous sigh of relief the girl released herself, and Wilder saw a very pretty, pale face and wonderful dark eyes in which a vanishing alarm was put to hastier flight by sudden twinkles of demure amusement. It made him wonder what on earth his own expression was, anyway.

"Ah, monsieur," said the girl, "I owe you an explanation—it may be an apology." Her English had the prettiest little accent in the world.

"Oh, not—not at all," he stammeringly assured her.

"There was no other way out, and I feared I should be found in the shadow. Then that ruse came to me. I thank you many times. You have saved more than you know. I had stolen away from home tonight to see the temple, and that man, monsieur, with the Englishman, was my uncle!"

Wilder stared at the white, delicately featured little face that the moonlight illumined so clearly for his inspection.

"Your uncle?"

"Oh, yes—my father was an Egyptian, an officer of the Khedive. But his mother was French, and his father's mother was French, and *my* mother was a Viennese—a Viennese dancer."

The intricacies of this family tree held the young man dumb.

"Did you think that we were all black and wore nose rings?" said the girl, with a mischievous laugh.

"I thought you were veiled," he retorted, recovering himself, "and stayed closely at home."

"Ah, we do; we must! That is why it would have been terrible to be discovered. But my father used to take me abroad, and I have seen the Pantheon and the Louvre and the Westminster Abbey—but never the things of my own country. So when I came here I said I would see Karnak. Hassan contrived it, but it frightened him to the death all the time!"

"You do not live at Luxor?" Wilder murmured. He had read in a general way of the tragedy of these girls of high birth and education, but the revelation was a little overpowering.

"No, at Cairo. I am here to visit my uncle's mother."

"Ah, the—the French grandmother."

"No, that was my father's mother. They were but step-brothers. The uncle's mother is a cousin of the Khedive—a dull, sleepy woman. But you, monsieur, you are English?"

"American."

"That is even better. Americans, I read, are so good to women, so—so—what is the word?"

"Chivalrous?" Wilder modestly suggested.

"Yes, *chi-val-rous*. So it was of a luckiness that I met you."

With frank curiosity she was looking him over, and he looked at her more carefully. The girl's loose, white coat revealed a gown of shimmering silk, cut in what he vaguely recognized as a present mode. There were pearls about her throat and a barbaric blaze of jewels from her laces. When she raised her arms to the light scarf over her head he caught the gleam of sparkling rings and bracelets.

With a child's zest she chattered on, asking him questions about the hotel and its life and himself and his life, till the dragoman returned to report that the way was clear. Assuming Wilder's escort as a matter of course, the girl gathered up her frilly skirts and followed the Arab's cautious lead. The way led out from the temple, past rubbish mounds, the siftings of excavators, to an old sacred lake, a stagnant pool, presided over by a circle of great stone gods. The moon made a ghostly picture of it—the pool was a basin of dissolving stars; the figures were mighty deities in solemn conclave.

"Who is that one?" murmured the girl.

"They are all images of Pasht—the goddess of maidens."

"Oh, I know! I have read. She is the prayer answerer. If a maiden comes for three nights with a gift of gold her prayer will be granted. I will make a prayer, then," she added laughing, and ran to the nearest image. "O Pasht, here is a prayer," she said and sank lightly to one knee, "and here

is my offering," and rising, she flung something high into the moonlight to drop, with a last sparkle, into the lake.

"The Prophet does not hear us women," she laughed, as she came back to Wilder, "so I shall be a true Egyptian and turn to the old gods. This is but one night, however. I must come again. It will be safe, too," she added, musingly, "for my uncle will not bring the Englishman a second time. . . . Monsieur, I do not ask your escort farther. It is better not. I thank you for all you have done."

"You are going?" Wilder said, stupidly enough.

"Oh, with infinite regret!" her mocking tone assured him. "I tear myself away—but it is of a necessity. *Adieu*." She gave him a most summary nod and ran down the slope to the shade where her escort waited. Once more her voice floated to him.

"*Au revoir, monsieur! Au revoir!*"

It was not till halfway to the hotel that Wilder's slow Anglo-Saxon brain grasped the significance of that last word. *Au revoir!* Could she then have meant—?

And what had she chattered about her prayer to the Goddess Pasht—about the safety of another visit?

In the sober light of the morning sun Wilder did not acknowledge any particular design to himself, but when night fell and the stars came out and the hotel guests gathered in gossip little cliques, he again ordered a carriage and drove to Karnak.

He went straight to the sacred lake, feeling a great fool about it all, and half minded to let the tongues of ridicule and common sense rout him from the place, but held, in spite of them, by the stronger clamor of curiosity and adventure.

He smoked two cigars while the moon sailed higher and higher, and the warm, southern wind brought the twang of strings and the wail of native voices softened by distance to weird harmony, and just when he was vowing that he wouldn't—

"O Pasht!" said a silvery voice, and he jumped to his feet in haste. "O

Pasht, a maid makes offering to you."

The girl was in the shadow before the image, shrouded in a black cloak and mantle. At his approach she gave a start and turned toward him two eyes of round amazement.

"Why, it is monsieur! Can it be monsieur is then the High Priest of this place?"

"And stands guard over all its worshippers," he replied.

She gave him a sudden, serious look, a look that he felt was intent and searching, then, as if satisfied with what she saw, slipped into merriment again.

"I am a true worshiper. I bring a good offering. Look!" Again something twinkled through the air into the still pool. "Do you think Pasht will answer my prayer, O Priest?"

"I am sure of it—if you do not desert her."

"Oh, that is not hard. It is only for three days. I can be faithful for three days. Still, three days is something," she added thoughtfully, "when you consider the risk."

The speech made Wilder uncomfortable. He grew more so when she went on talking, sitting beside him in the shadow, of her expedient for escape, the garden that bordered on a lane and the two conniving servants. The hazard she ran was obtruding itself unpleasantly upon him. The first meeting had been chance, but this. . . . Why had he come? Why had she? Cosmopolitan though she might seem, there was the Oriental viewpoint behind it—and what, in fact, would any viewpoint be of a stolen meeting in the moonlight between a young American and a lovely inmate of an Egyptian harem?

Speech became difficult to him and silence was constraint. Her eyes embarrassed with their intentness. He wished she would turn them away. He wished she hadn't come. He wished to heaven that he hadn't.

Suddenly she leaned forward, her eyes still seeking his.

"Monsieur, you were very good to

me last night, very *chi-val-rous*. You saved me. Will you—will you save me again? I have no one else to ask. Will you help me escape?"

In a shock of alarm he heard his voice telling her that he would like to oblige her so—oh, nothing better!—but that, really, he could be of no service—his experience in these matters was so limited—

She broke in with swift pleading. Her laughter had fled and her voice trembled with anxiety. Her father, she said, had petted her, but his death had left her dependent on that despot of an uncle, who meant to marry her to an officer in his regiment—oh, such a villain of an officer! Old and ugly and terrible. She knew all about him! And she had seen him, too, from behind her window screen. Besides, there was another, she added suddenly, who loved her and whom she loved—a French officer whom she had met in Paris. Her father had intended to let them marry, but now there was no hope unless this good, kind, true-hearted American would take pity and help her out of the country.

"I have the money—my jewels are rich—but not the help," she besought.

Wilder was horribly embarrassed.

"But—that's impossible! Don't you see? What can I do?"

"Everything!" she came out triumphantly. "You said you were leaving soon—must return to your business. Leave, then, tomorrow night on the express to Cairo, and then to Alexandria, where there is a boat to sail to Italy—to Naples. It is the *Schleswig*. Just take me with you. With your protection I shall be safe. No one will suspect. My clothes are European. I will bring no servant. I will not trouble you in any way. Oh, I wish you were a woman! A woman would not let a girl go to such misery!" Her voice trembled and broke. "I will be no trouble—no trouble at all," she pleaded pitifully.

It would have taken a brute or a block to refuse. Wilder was neither. He could not find it in his heart to deny such an appeal, nor thrust such a girl

back to the wretchedness of a blackguardly marriage when freedom and love and happiness needed only his help to be hers.

In the end he promised to meet her there, ready for flight, the next evening.

"I will go as your sister," she said. "No, we are too unlike—sisters are suspicious. It would be better as your wife. Then no one would—"

Cold perspiration stood on the young man's brow.

"No—no!" he protested. "That wouldn't do at all! I might meet someone—some American—"

"Ah, I have it! I will be your mother. That will be safest of all."

"My mother!"

"Your step-mother. I will powder my hair and wear a black veil. You could say your father had a young wife. Many fathers do."

What Wilder said to himself next day was not for publication. But he kept his word like a man, and that evening stood on the shore of the sacred lake confronting a slim young thing in black, with a black veil which she flung back to display proudly a fluff of white powdered hair. The contrast with her dark eyes and fresh young skin was dazzling. And—oh, diabolical coquetry of woman!—she had decked her dimpled chin with a star of black court plaster! She was a Watteau shepherdess—a French Marquise of the Empire—anything but the step-mother of an unassuming American.

Wilder groaned with a complexity of emotion. "How old are you, really?"

"Seventeen."

"Seventeen! And what is your name?"

"Aimée. What is it now—Wilder? That is a pretty name. Madame—no, Mrs. Wilder. That little bag is all I could bring away."

As he stooped for it, the strangeness of the situation came over him with fresh sharpness. Decidedly, Egypt was a country where things occurred! Like a man in a dream he waited, while the girl for the last time went through her play of prayer and offering.

"O Pasht, it is the third night. Here is my offering . . . Do not forget my prayer!"

"A fair trip."

"Oh, fine!"

"Didn't imagine there was sea enough to trouble anyone. A pity your mother felt it."

Wilder looked nervously at the rudely young Englishman at his right, who was looking intently at the slender veiled figure at the American's left.

"Oh my—my step-mother is a wretched sailor," he said hastily. "All right in her stateroom, but can't stand the deck."

He wished the Englishman would look away. He wished Aimée had worn a denser veil. He wished the Italian customs officers would make haste. His manner while wishing these things did not invite conversation, but the Englishman was not of a race that surrenders. Presently he came plumply out with a direct—

"I say—I should really like to be presented to your step-mother, you know."

It was a reasonable enough request, for the young fellow's steamer chair had been next to Wilder's and the two had exchanged a fair amount of conversation. But Wilder had no mind to steer straight into Charybdis.

"My step-mother," he stated coldly, "I am sorry to say is—is nervous and—and averse to society. She shrinks from meeting anyone."

Something, behind Aimée's veil, was smothered to a discreet cough.

But the landing was without further incident, unless the continued staring of the Englishman could be called a further incident, and that night the Signor Wilder, and the Signora, his mother, were registered at the Quirinal at Rome, where they dined merrily together in a private sitting room, for Wilder was opposed to all unnecessary publicity. He had uneasy visions of a squad of *bersaglieri* dragging them off to the Turkish consul. But no hint of care marred the girl's light-heartedness. She was delight incarnate.

"Now we are quite safe," she cried

when the lights of Paris began to flash on their train. They had the compartment to themselves, and she had been chattering like a magpie. "I shall never be found. My mother was never found. She is somewhere in Europe now. She was a Viennese dancer, I did tell you, and she loved my father and married him and came to Cairo. But she could not endure the life. And she coaxed him to take her to Europe one summer—I do not remember, I was so little, but Maryam told me—and ran away. But my father was always very good to me. I wonder now if I shall find my mother."

It did not appear to Wilder that a lively Viennese dancer who had abandoned her baby girl to an Egyptian harem would be a rewarding discovery. He eyed this daughter of strange parents curiously, and reflected that the French officer was taking a chance. Then the thought shamed him. She was so young and fresh and sweet, so brave of spirit and delicate of wit, that the officer should thank his gods for the gift. She was just a lovely, ignorant, daring child—woman, with rare potentialities for the man she loved, and Wilder, looking on that confident youth, felt suddenly very old and anxious and tender, and prayed the Captain Vilfours would deal gently with her.

Mademoiselle regarded him curiously, with that birdlike tilt of her head that he had noticed.

"Of what are you thinking? Here is a piastre for those thoughts."

He pocketed the little silver coin with care. "I was thinking of when I first met you."

To his surprise she flushed—a rare thing with My Lady Audacity!—and then laughed. "That must have been a—shock to you! What did you think then—truly?"

"Well, truly, then, I wondered if you had picked my pocket!"

"Oh!" She frowned furiously, then her lips curved again with youth's inextinguishable laughter. "Well, I have! I have been a great expense. You must sell my jewels for me the first thing in Paris. That was my last piastre."

"Perhaps Captain Vilfours can make a better bargain for them than I."

"Oh, no—I want you to do it. I want to have some money when I meet him."

And Wilder thought he understood.

In the quiet of the *Tivollier* he left her while he made what he thought a fair bargain for a half-dozen diamonds from a bracelet. She was in raptures over the bank notes.

"Six thousand! And you have paid yourself for the tickets—every sou? Come, then, and we will go shopping. I have sent a wire to the Captain and I must be fine when he comes tonight!"

So shopping Wilder went, and the affair from which he had always shrunk with vague bachelor horror proved an amusing, though lengthy performance, consisting of excited descents upon milliners and modistes, glove shops, boot shops and fur shops, with interludes of solitary waiting in the cab. And at the end of the hours, in place of the black-frocked girl with powder-streaked locks, behold a miracle of a mademoiselle in demure gray, gown and gloves and dainty shoes, and, as befitted the March day, a stole of silver chinchilla about her throat and a toque of chinchilla on her black hair, with a saucy aigrette that imperiled Wilder's profile.

"Am I not *chic*?" she demanded anxiously, and Wilder thought he had never found a woman's vanity so appealing. He was aware of a desire to add something to that *toilette*, a desire that fulfilled itself in a vast bunch of fragrant violets.

Delightedly she buried her nose in them. "Ah, lovely! And now I have all I want—except lunch, monsieur!"

After luncheon they betook themselves to the Bois, where Mademoiselle insisted on alighting for a walk.

"It is so long since I have been in a wood—I do not know how long!"

Her pleasure in her freedom was a wonderful thing to Wilder, but beneath his joy for her rested an anxiety that would not be dispelled until he had laid eyes upon the features of the Captain Vilfours and ascertained that

gentleman's character. He brought up the matter now:

"Our consul, this morning, said it required two weeks for the banns. Shall you remain at the hotel with me, mademoiselle, or has the Captain some friends—"

She stopped suddenly and his sentence stopped too. After a strange fluttering look her eyes fell to the violets in her hands.

"There is, monsieur, no Captain Vilfours!" she announced.

"No Captain Vilfours!"

"I regret—for I have grown attached to him—but that is truth."

"But—but—"

She raised her eyes for an infinitesimal fraction of a second. "I made him up, that captain! What is the word?—I man-u-fac-ture him."

"But—but why?"

"So you would take me away. Oh, it was all true about my uncle and that other, but I made up about the Captain so you would see you would be free from me when we came to France. You are quite free from me now. The only difference is that I take care of myself. I need no Captain Vilfours."

"You take care of yourself?"

"Why not? My mother did. She was an actress. Perhaps I shall be an actress. I do not know, but I have money, I speak the languages, I know the ways. Do not worry for me, monsieur. I am happy, very happy, and for that I thank you—you do not know *how* I thank you! You have been so very, very good to me."

Again Wilder had a fleeting glimpse of soft, dark, shining eyes. Again they sank to the violets whose little heads the gray-gloved fingers were so busy with. Again he heard his voice saying as he had said beside the sacred lake:

"But—but that's impossible. Don't you see?"

The absurdity of it quite choked him. Aimée take care of herself! She was throwing herself as blindly on the world as she had on his shoulders that night, and his care had not forewarned her of the world's reception.

"Would you like to make it up to me—what I have done?" he asked with swift decision.

"But yes—indeed, yes!"

"Then you will just let me go on taking care of you."

She smiled with sudden mischief. "Must I powder my hair again," she sighed plaintively, "and return to the black dress, *mon fils*?"

"Not your son," he laughed. "But you husband, dear girl, if you will trust him."

Suddenly he raised his head. Un-

doubtedly it was wheels—yes, it was wheels and a cab and in the cab a young man gazing with all his eyes.

Wilder's wonder-fogged brain took some time to grasp the connection; then he cried, "Why, it's the English fellow—the one on the boat! What is he thinking?"

"He is thinking," said the girl, adjusting a tipsy little toque, "that you, monsieur, have indeed an affection for your step-mother! And for that affection," she added whimsically, with a ripple of laughter, "I do indeed thank my three rings to the Goddess Pasht!"



TO GALAHAD

By ALOIS KIRNAN

DEAR friend, your thought, your gentle thought, I know;

Your wish to speak of friendship sweet—you'd pray

Acceptance of your gratitude and say

My faith had helped to keep the vision clear; but though

We part forever, yet we part not so;

The moment's mine, and by my words today

I tear my woman's pride to shreds and lay

My soul before you—bare, for I will show

The truth to you in spite of all the cost.

I tell you, wait! I will not let you speak!

What one has never had cannot be lost;

So nothing can I lose, nor do I seek

What is not—not for me—the most

Of life to other women. Oh, we're weak!

The vision filled my life until you came,

But now it's gone, and in its place is fixed

The thought of you—the thought of you unmixed

With hope, yet gladly do I yield that same

Sweet vision since I've called you by your name,

Looked in your eyes and been by them transfixed.

I love you, do you hear? What seemed betwixt

The two of us was false; I do not blame

One act of yours—of this you never dreamed.

The vision held your gaze, and all the rest

Was but the food to nourish that which seemed

To you supremely good—to me confessed

The object of your life—the light that gleamed

So pure. Now go. Oh, go! The Quest! the Quest!

AN IMPRACTICAL JOKE

By GRACE TABOR

WRAPPED in mauve paper, the package was carefully addressed with violet ink in carefully lettered Old English type; it gave out a faint odor of violets, was tied with violet string and the knot caught beneath a splotch of violet wax.

Familiar enough odor, of course, violets—oh, yes; yet young Mr. Melrose sniffed it now with vaguely reminiscent stirrings. Why? What did it remind him of? When was it? And where? Ah! He comprehended suddenly in a flash; he was back in college—yes, yes, indeed, that was it—living over again days that were fragrant with violet, days through which glided a slim, violet-clad phantom, sinuous, dark-eyed and lovely, who wafted a fragrance of the blossom as she moved; veritably a Violet Lady as they had called her.

His face grew uncomfortably warm as memory surged back; little streaks of fire flickered up over his brow and lost themselves under his trimly brushed hair as he thought with shame—and pity—of the folly of that time and of the lengths to which women will go sometimes—some women. And with his mind thus harassed, and his nostrils filled with the compelling scent, his eyes dwelt with growing disfavor upon the delicate parcel.

All that was a decade back, yet this—rubbish! He swore at himself a little under his breath, jerked the string rudely from its waxy moorings and pulled viciously at the folds of the dainty paper until the object within at last issued forth. A book, eh? Well, that wasn't much to fuss about. Of course, it—what's this? Poetry?

The devil! *Love* poems—a collection of them! Well, by the Lord Harry!

"And it looks it, too," he mused, turning the volume over and examining its violet binding with lofty disdain. A card fell out as he opened the pages, and he seized it eagerly, but it was no clue; only a pictorial bunch of violets and a glittering "Birthday Greetings" met his eyes. And the most careful search from cover to cover yielded nothing further—nothing except the aggravating conclusion that the gift was indeed anonymously sent, and that every precaution had been taken to guard the sender's identity.

Satisfied of this, it never occurred to him to question the instinct which had led his thoughts to the Violet Lady. There had been a birthday then, he remembered gloomily, when her photograph, framed in brilliants and buried in a mass of violets, had been not the least among his gifts. How vividly it all came back—confound it!—on this anniversary—the first since his marriage!

He foresaw, with maritally sharpened acumen, the difficulties which would beset him in any effort that he might make toward explaining the gift to Josephine. And yet the idea of preserving a silence in regard to it which resembled the refuge of actual guilt was decidedly abhorrent to him. Anything short of the whole story, however, from beginning to end, would never do. What had he, therefore, to tell?

He knitted his brow rather savagely. How should he say . . . hang it! there are some things which can't be said. How would it be possible to make Josephine understand? The Lady had

—but here came a blank space. No, certainly there was nothing to say to Josephine; he would not say it even to himself.

So, while he despised the act of deceit, negative though it was, he decided upon it—and truth compels me to add that the masculine impulse to side-step on issues of this nature warmly commended his decision. And his irritation was considerably soothed.

"It's perfectly obvious," he said to himself, "that it should not and, indeed, cannot be mentioned to Josephine." And with a sigh of relief he folded the book in its wrappings, paid his luncheon cheque and went out.

"Billy!"—it was a little squeal of delight—"bless him!" Then came a whirl, a rush, a distracting flurry of soft ruffles, and a flying form, light and pliant yet withal of gratifying substance, was made prisoner by his arms.

"It's a whole hour earlier than I was going to begin expecting you, dear—that's why I'm making such a fuss," she explained naively. "And isn't it nice that you're home early?"

"I thought so."

"How beautifully we always agree, don't we?"

"So far, we seem to."

"So far! You horrid you! Do you mean that we sha'n't *always*?"

"M'm—well, I should hesitate to go as far as that, of course. I trust that your sense of wifely duty will prevent any serious dissensions," and he tweaked her ear.

The summons to dinner interrupted the argument before it had grown too heated. "Sure enough," said Mrs. Melrose, "I quite forgot that I said to have it early—because, you know, somehow I expected you would be here to-night a long time ahead of the time I expected you."

It was a sumptuous little feast in honor of the day, and they both ate with the appetite of youth and health. But as the meal progressed Mrs. Melrose grew a bit uneasy, and was keenly, almost expectantly, attentive when-

ever her husband spoke. With the coffee she remarked casually, "There is your birthday box of cigars from Cousin George, dear—his special brand you are so fond of. You must smoke one now." Then after a slight pause, "I suppose you got a lot of things at the office."

"Not a great many; certainly, nothing like these cigars of Cousin George's."

She raised her eyebrows, smiling, sipped her coffee three times deliberately and then she asked, "Didn't Jerry Collingwood send you anything?"

"Oh—to be sure, he did. He came in and brought it; funny little Chinese devil—or maybe it's an idol—a peach."

"Collie's a dear," she affirmed; at which he nodded approvingly but without speaking. Truth to tell, he was somewhat disturbed at the trend of the conversation. It was not by any means his intention to lie—only to refrain from mentioning a certain very trifling matter.

After a minute of silence she looked across at him, fidgeted a bit, then, "What else—came?" she asked between bites of a cheese wafer.

"Oh, Lordy, where'll she stop?" he groaned inwardly. Aloud he answered nonchalantly: "Oh, a card from Aunt Jane. Bit of sentiment with her, you know, always to greet me at the office on this festal morn—bless her old heart!"

"That all?" she queried after eating quietly for a minute. The tone implied only a mild interest in making conversation.

He laughed nervously, but genuinely, nevertheless, in spite of himself at being thus run to cover. Then, all tenderness and sincerity, he leaned toward her across the table. "My darling," he said soberly, yet lightly, "what else should there be?" His hand closed over hers as it lay on the cloth, and he smiled a my-life-is-an-open-book-to-you smile straight into her eyes. As a matter of fact, it was, but . . .

"I don't know," she replied. "Was there nothing else?"

He sighed as he shook his head. "No," he said glibly.

Mr. Melrose wore an air of perplexity as he entered his office the next morning, which left him, however, as the day advanced and the impression which caused it grew dim. But it returned fourfold when he greeted his wife at night, and increased by leaps and bounds through the next day and the next. What had come over her? She seemed a stranger and bore herself with an elusive reserve as impenetrable as it was intangible; and whenever he thought to question her, to seek an explanation, he met a disconcerting look in her eyes which held him tongue-tied and filled him with an awkward bashfulness.

By the end of the week, when Collingwood ran in and found him glaring belligerently at the luckless little idol while he ruminated, the situation was rapidly becoming intolerable. It was indeed so near it that he was unconsciously dreading to go home. Therefore, it was with genuine relief as well as pleasure that he sprang to his feet.

"You're coming home with me for Sunday," he affirmed, wringing his hand. "Don't stop for words; we can make the two-eighths if you hustle, and still give you time to get your traps. I'll meet you at the train. Right about now and hotfoot it!" and he pushed him through the door without time for even a polite demur.

His wife welcomed Collingwood warmly, and there was no doubt that she was very glad to see him—as glad as she was surprised, evidently. She silenced gracefully and airily his excuses for intruding, and in ten minutes had him wishing that he had come long before. How different the atmosphere from that which Billy had learned to dread! Could it be that she, too, was actually relieved at the presence of a third person? The wondering thought gradually merged into a distinct sense of injury and indignation. Things were in a bad way, indeed!

Dinner was a pleasanter function than it had been in some days. Josephine tossed the bubble of conversation lightly into the air as they seated themselves, giving it a twirl that sent

it toward Collingwood. He caught it and passed it on to Billy, whence it went up at random. It came down near her, but Mrs. Melrose made no attempt to capture it, though she accepted the challenge readily enough when the pitch was Collingwood's. Billy soon was alive to this and watched the game whimsically. From one to two, from two to three, from three to two, from two to one, back and forth it went, but never on around the triangle. He had grown quite interested in the alternating sequence, when suddenly the whole thing came down smash, without warning, before him.

"That gave me a start that hasn't been equaled since," Collingwood was saying, "until yesterday. But yesterday's was different. I meant to tell you before, Billy. Clarke Giddings, old Professor Giddings's boy, told me; he ran in on his way to the station. It's about the Violet Lady.

Billy stared.

"She was just back from Europe, stopping over for a few days here at her brother's, and," his voice lowered, "and she died there very suddenly on Thursday."

Billy breathed deeply.

"Poor little woman," Collingwood went on; "somehow, I never thought of her as dying. It seems incongruous."

There was an instant's silence and then Billy spoke, slowly and absently, as one thinks aloud. "Here in New York—on Thursday—well, well!"

"By Jove!" blurted Jerry after another pause that grew almost oppressive, "how we all loved that woman at one time or another, didn't we? Wasn't she a wonder? In spite of her laughing at them, the boys were all mad about her—or maybe because of it. But she didn't laugh at you, Billy, half as much as at the rest of us, or half as much as you deserved; for he deserved it, Mrs. Billy, quite as much as we did—and how we hated him for it! He couldn't help it, though; he was one of those big, hulking, indifferent young 'uns that women always spoil."

"For heaven's sake, dry up!" growled Billy, a baleful gleam in his eyes.

Collingwood removed the ash from his cigar carefully, smiled deprecatingly at his hostess and murmured, "Modest, too." She joined in his laugh, but Billy's brusque, "Well—she's dead, you say," checked their humor somewhat.

Touched and regretful, he sat hardly aware of the lightsome folly which he was not sharing. Silence settled upon him as the thought of the little gift filled him with a not unpleasant melancholy. Long ago he had been sorry for her, and now he was sorry for her death and for the gift and the feeling which prompted it—and sorrier for the flaws in creation. This brought him up to his own sense of injury, and then he awoke to the outrageous manner in which Josephine was flirting with Collingwood. For he saw only that she was laughing and coquetting gaily and did not know that, since she had watched him with narrowing eyes during Jerry's recital, she had scarcely lifted her lids once.

It was not like Josephine. What had come over her? What did these last days mean? What did this mean? And would the evening never end?

He stretched himself a great many times, as men will when they are bored—and at home—before Jerry said good night. And he escorted him eagerly as far as the stairs, and watched him all the way to the top. Then he came slowly back into the library. Josephine had gone out onto the terrace, where the moon was shining, and he followed her.

"You have had a pleasant evening?" he asked.

"For which I am not indebted to you," came the crisp answer. He stared at her dumfounded, and she laughed flippantly at his surprise.

"Doubtless you have a reason for this," he said gravely, "though at the risk of seeming very dense, I confess I am unable to surmise what it may be."

A provoking, ironical smile lingered around her mouth.

"If I had merited humiliation at your hands," he continued, "I should try to take the medicine without a grimace, but under the circum-

stances—" A pause finished his protest.

"Merit does not always bring its just reward," she said, "nor, for that matter, does the lack of it. But surely I do not understand that *you* have been drinking the unpleasant draught of humiliation?"

"I don't know what you would call it," he answered, "but it seems to me when a man is shown so clearly that he is less welcome in his own home than a stranger—"

"Oh! Jerry's not a stranger," she expostulated.

—"than a stranger," he insisted, "and not only shown it, but told it in plain words—to say nothing of how plain it has been made to that stranger, it is decidedly nothing less than a distinct humiliation."

"Well—then we are even," she said lightly, with a shrug. "Jerry came to my rescue so beautifully, however, that I flatter myself I never turned a hair. Of course he understood—that, you see"—her voice grew sharp—"was the humiliation—that he *did* understand."

"What in the devil are you talking about?" demanded the puzzled Billy. "Will you be good enough to explain? What is it all about? What has happened?"

"Why, it was a hard way to hear news of that sort, and of course you couldn't help the way you felt. Anyone that's half a man is bound to care, and it wasn't tactful of Jerry; I am sorry about it all, about her dying and—all that. Truly I am, Billy. I'm not adjusted to some things yet, but I understand a little; you feel her death, I know—you—"

The gulp which choked further utterance was lost in her husband's indignant exclamation. "Shame on you, Josephine Melrose! This is unworthy of you!" He was aflame at he knew not what and cared less. He only knew that he resented hotly what seemed an indignity put upon one less fortunate than herself by his wife, *his wife*, of all people! Poor, dead Violet Lady! Surely it was his duty to champion her loyally, who had

honored him so signally. He would, too—seeing that she was safely in her grave.

"Jerry Collingwood's a fool," he continued warmly, "and I'm surprised at him. The boys *did* all love her, to be sure; calf love—for she was a kind, sweet, lovable, generous, beautiful woman. She hadn't a mean hair in her head—neither mean nor small; she was just true blue all around, and that we all knew—and I know it and now declare it." He had been considerably troubled during the evening when he remembered his ungracious reception of her little gift, but at this he felt better—so he went on, determined to make the most of the opportunity to square this account.

"There are always those who don't understand or appreciate such a woman, who talk like Collie, who—who—make light of very lovely, womanly traits and all that." He flushed in the darkness and floundered; perhaps this was laying it on a bit thick, all things considered. But his own sense of injury had not been diminished by the evening's developments, and his indignation at Josephine was by no means waning—hence he resumed after a few waning puffs of his cigar.

"That was the way with the fellows up there. They didn't understand her, though they did go wild about her—and no more did I, for that matter, but somehow she got the idea that I did. Women get notions like that. And she did fancy me—quite a little, I believe—more, possibly, than I ever gave her credit for. The reason that I seemed to 'feel her death,' as you say, was because I had recently had proof of this, touching proof. Poor little woman—I don't know how she remembered." He stopped in pensive contemplation.

She gasped. "Proof! What do you mean? How dare she—how could a woman—what was it? What did she do? When?" For the life of her she could not stop the torrent of questions. She tried ineffectually, raging at her weakness, then, failing, held her breath for his answer.

He looked down at her thoughtfully.

"I don't know that I ought to say any more, even to you," he reflected. "Women blame a woman so if she breaks through the limitations custom imposes upon her, and you are no exception to the rule, Josephine, I am sure; you are like all the rest."

She felt as if she deserved something very bad when he fixed her with an accusing eye. He went on: "I've never seen the Violet Lady in all the years since I left college, and rarely have I heard any news of her—yet there came to me on my last birthday a gift from her." He looked very solemn as he uncovered this secret of the dead. "I presume she knew nothing of our marriage, and I was sorry, of course, that it came, but now that she is dead I cannot and will not have her friendship lightly spoken of, or made the target for foolish jest. I wish that she hadn't wanted to send it—I may with propriety say this much to my wife, I think—but as long as she did, I'd be a pretty poor specimen if I held her in less esteem or allowed anyone else to do so on account of it."

"What did she send, Billy?" asked his wife faintly.

"A little volume of—verse, bound in violet, wrapped, tied and sealed with violet, with a violet birthday card in it; everything about it was violet. That's how I knew it came from her. The color and scent were so identified with her, as you know from the name, Violet Lady, that the boys always called her."

Josephine rose trembling from her chair. Later, perhaps—at some distant future time—she might see the absurdities, but right now she only saw that the shadow of despair was lifting. Every throb of the glad blood in her heart told her that.

"Billy, oh, Billy!" and she stretched out her arms toward him. "Was *that* the way of it? Oh, my dearest, thank God, thank God!" He caught her and held her close, sobbing and incoherent. "With all my heart," he assented devoutly, not understanding in the least.

"And all the time I thought—oh, what a wretched, wretched thing!

I'll never forgive myself, and you—you will never forgive me!"

He laughed and drew her closer. "But whoever dreamed it would turn out that way," she went on, "when it was all just fun—when I only meant it for that? And how miserable I've been—oh, dear!" A flood of tears drowned further utterance. Then suddenly she stopped and looked up at him. "Dear," she said earnestly, "do you suppose I *did* mean more than that? Have I deserved these days? Was it *only* fun?"

"Suppose you tell me all about it and let me judge," he suggested gently, seeing how deeply she was moved.

"I think I know"—the tone was very low and ashamed. "I think I know now. It seemed innocent and I'd never have suspected if what I anticipated had happened, but now I believe there was a low, skulking, mean suspicion behind it; or maybe it was the woman ego struggling for ascendancy—possibly it was both. Anyway, I thought—ugh! Oh, Billy, I thought it would be a joke, and you'd tell me and wonder and I'd pretend to be jealous to tease you, but instead of that, you didn't tell, and then I thought it was

real and that there *was* someone else—" she sobbed afresh. "Don't you see?" she cried desperately. "How can I ever tell? It's awful, and now I know it! You must forgive me; you must, you must! Billy—it was—I who sent that wretched book!"

He stared. "You, Josephine?"

She nodded, then collapsed miserably against his breast. For a long time neither of them stirred, but at last he laid his cheek softly against her hair, and she crept closer and clung to him with beseeching arms. "Yet it wasn't so different from what you had planned," he said—and she shook her head—"only a little more so." At which she signaled an affirmative. "Which makes it evident," he went on, "that some things won't be trifled with. They resent liberties." She nodded again with thoughtful emphasis.

"Well," he said, his gravity relaxing into a tender smile, "I shouldn't wonder if that is a good thing to have found out. And I suspect," he added drily a little later as they turned to go into the house, "that there are humorous phases to this episode which we shall both enjoy, once we are far enough removed from it to appreciate them."



THE MIRAGED CITY

By RHODA HERO DUNN

THE glittering splendor of the Avenue,
 Grim shadows of great towers, and at their feet
 Faint sunsets through some many-windowed street—
 How these in ever varying form and hue
 Return to me in memory! Till the blue
 Of skies Sicilian, and this island seat
 Of loveliness too radiantly complete
 Recedes before me and is lost to view!
 I love, indeed, the feathery fall of streams
 Through terraced gardens, where the olive tree
 Sheds silver shelter, and late moonlight gleams
 In shattered gold upon a summer sea.
 But oh, Manhattan! All this land of dreams
 I would forego for one far glimpse of thee!

LE BON MAITRE

Par LEO LARGUIER

UN large bocal à la devanture de la pharmacie projetait sur le trottoir humide, sans qu'il eût plu, une colonne verte qui décomposait le visage des rares passants attardés encore dans la grand'rue.

Le bourg achevait de dîner, et la nuit d'octobre était poudrée, ainsi qu'un chasselas, d'une poussière vaporeuse; les chaudes étoiles d'août ne luisaient plus toutes, et sous la lune ronde comme une meule, le ciel semblait semé d'une fine mouture d'astres.

Les clochettes de porcelaine de la gare annonçaient l'express de Paris. Huit heures sonnèrent à l'église, et lorsque la vieille horloge eut tinté, celle de la mairie immédiatement commença, et, dans le silence de ce coin de province, sur la paisible ville aux toits luisants, le temps, le temps immuable et toujours sérieux et égal, avait l'air d'être devenu subitement fou et de sonner une heure étrange dans la nuit. Le gros bourg dinait dans un bruit de vaisselle et de fourchettes, à la faveur de petites lampes. On savait que le docteur Coste avait été invité avec sa famille à l'Enregistrement, que le curé n'était pas bien, qu'on avait baptisé la fille du receveur-buraliste, et c'étaient presque là tous les événements.

Grimpée sur une chaise, Elodie, la servante du café du Siècle, vint allumer le quinquet acétylène dont l'installation avait fait parler, et tout d'un coup, le mur de l'orphelinat, en face, fut éclairé, avec les pointes de ses arbres sombres et les verres de couleur qui servent au 14 Juillet, les verres qu'on oublie toujours d'enlever avant l'hiver et qui éclatent aux premières gelées parce qu'ils

sont pleins d'eau de pluie ainsi que des bénitiers.

Deux messieurs surgis de l'ombre, entre les caisses des fusains, levèrent les yeux vers la lampe et entrèrent. Le dernier pinça la bonne, qui murmura pour la forme une protestation sans foi.

Ils s'attablèrent. Elodie apporta sur un plateau de cuivre le café et le carafon gradué de cognac, et tous les deux la regardèrent parce qu'elle était jeune et rouge et qu'ils avaient des épouses sèches et sévères.

M. Roure se pencha vers M. Planque: "On lui avait dit qu'à Paris..." et la confidence ne fut entendue que par le gros homme pensif dont les yeux ternes brillèrent.

Le greffier arriva, se frottant les mains.

Ils déployaient, pour être là chaque soir, des trésors de diplomatie et de ruse. Ils faisaient venir la chose de loin, insinuaient, au commencement du dîner, que cela les ennuyait, mais que, peut-être, ils seraient obligés d'aller voir un tel pour une affaire...

Passionné de musique, affirmait-il, le greffier réclama le phonographe.

L'instrument était sur un coin de table, le pavillon menaçant comme une gueule de canon, sourd encore, mais plein de rengaines qu'on allait déchaîner.

Le cafetier s'avança, toucha un bouton, et l'ouvrier parisien emmena tout de suite *poupoule* au concert.

Recueillis, ils écoutaient la chanson et les nasillements pour la cent millième fois. Elodie rêvait de splendeurs inconnues.

Déjà, M. Planque avait attaqué le ca-

rafon de cognac, il l'avait même vaincu à moitié, et la bonne servait la bière.

— Nous ferions bien un domino sans piocher, mais il faut que vous rentriez à neuf heures, dit le greffier en regardant M. Planque.

Le phonographe répétait maintenant les commandements militaires et jouait le défilé de la garde républicaine, et M. Planque, tyrannisé par sa femme, qui le bousculait lorsqu'il rentrait du café, enivré par ces musiques martiales, grisé par les polissonneries à la mode, et fort de se sentir au milieu d'un groupe ami, commanda le domino lui-même, ajoutant, à la stupéfaction de ses camarades, que le feu aurait beau prendre à sa boutique, il ne rentrerait pas, ce soir, avant dix heures!

On l'applaudit. Un homme était un homme, que diable!

Et ils se mirent à touiller les dominos et à verser la bière.

Neuf heures sonnèrent au cadran doré de la salle. On regarda M. Planque: il ne broncha pas.

La voix lugubre de l'instrument, qui continuait à dévider impitoyablement tous les morceaux de sa série, attaquait triomphalement l'air célèbre:

To-réador, prends ga-aa-arde,
To-réador, to-réador!

— C'est à moi de mettre, dit M. Planque, et il posa le double-six.

Il frappait les pions contre le marbre de la table, menant rondement les parties, qu'il gagnait avec une chance inaccoutumée.

Ah! on verrait bien! Il en avait assez, à la fin. Tous les soirs, dès aujourd'hui, il rentrerait à dix heures; et il viendrait au Siècle, oui, au Siècle, parce que ça lui faisait plaisir, et voilà tout!

Ses victoires et les canettes de bière aidant, il se cuirassait intérieurement il était fier de lui comme ceux qui secouent des jougs séculaires et renversent les vieilles tyrannies, dans un grand élan, au soleil d'un jour de liberté!

A dix heures moins cinq, le greffier lui-même, qui était célibataire, se leva et prétendit qu'il ne fallait pas abuser.

M. Planque sentit qu'il avait été un peu loin, et la forteresse qu'il avait échafaudée dans son cœur chancela.

Dans son corridor, il ne lui restait plus une résolution.

A tâtons, il gagna sa chambre. Un trait de lumière en soulignait le bas de la porte, et le trou de la serrure semblait un œil rouge qui le fixait.

Il entra.

Sa redoutable épouse, lasse d'attendre, empilait, pour se calmer un peu, du linge au plus haut rayon de son armoire.

La glace de la cheminée doublait sa carrure de gendarme, et M. Planque ne savait plus distinguer sa femme de son image.

Il ne demeura pas longtemps indécis.

La véritable Mme Planque, cramoisie, sauta de sa chaise:

— Ah! oui! dit-elle, ah! oui!

Et ces deux mots glacèrent le timide mari.

Il étendit les bras, la tint à distance. Alors elle lui tourna le dos. Elle chercha quelque chose qui ne devait pas être dans la chambre. Elle sortit; il l'entendait heurter les chaises de la cuisine.

Il lui restait la fenêtre ou le lit.

Il se coula sous la vaste couche conjugale, et quand l'épouse irritée revint, n'ayant trouvé que le court balai des tapis, elle demeura stupéfaite de ne plus le voir.

Le désordre de la peau d'ours, près de la table de nuit, lui indiqua la cachette.

Elle s'accroupit et fit passer son balai sous le lit. Elle balayait le parquet sans succès. Deux sous vinrent rouler près de la cheminée, puis elle ramena quelques flocons de cette bourre que les ménagères appellent des "moutons," et une sandale usée que la femme de ménage avait dû repousser là-dessous.

M. Planque ne soufflait pas.

Elle découvrit un gant qu'elle avait cherché longtemps, et pendant qu'elle l'époussetait, l'assiégé invisible eut un instant de répit. L'express sifflait en sortant du tunnel. Il passa, ébranlant les vitres, et, le silence revenu, M. Planque put entendre le phonographe du café du Siècle nasiller:

Viens, poupoule; viens, poupoule;
Viens.

Il ne voyait pas son ennemie, il ne distinguait que l'effort d'un balai trop court qui eût voulu l'atteindre.

L'épouse se jugea sans doute ridicule, et, dépitée, cessa l'attaque.

— Sortiras-tu, à la fin?

M. Planque dédaigna de répondre, sentant que les choses s'arrangeaient.

— Tu veux donc passer la nuit sous le lit? A ton aise, moi, je me couche.

Un juçon tomba sur le tapis avec un bruit d'étoffe froissée, les boutons d'un corsage sonnèrent contre une chaise, le lit craqua, la lampe s'éteignit.

Alors, d'une voix qu'il voulait autoritaire, M. Planque prononça dans l'ombre:

— Je ne sortirai pas, bobonne; je ne sortirai que quand cela me plaira, parce qu'un homme doit être maître chez lui!



A U J O U R D ' H U I

Par GILLES MAY

AUJOURD'HUI, parce que le ciel est un cantique,
 Parce que le jour pur, épanoui, mystique,
 Offre une coupe d'or au lointain recueilli;
 Parce que le grand monde étale sur son lit
 Son voile fait d'azur sur sa forme éclatante;
 Parce que l'onde rit en fécondant la plante;
 Parce que le soleil écrase en mille sens,
 Aux lèvres du sol mûr, mille graines d'encens;
 Parce que l'arbre épais, ployé sous sa lumière,
 Est comme un doux géant aux pieds de la rivière;
 Parce que l'air rapide évente d'un roseau
 Le large front du bord et les yeux clairs de l'eau
 Au sein las du vallon, parce que croît la sève,
 Parce que les bois clos frémissent de leur rêve;

Parce que je suis seul devant l'immensité,
 Nature à ton midi, nature à mon été;
 Parce que ton sourire a le goût de la vie;
 Parce que ma prunelle, à ta forme asservie,
 Pénètre jusqu'au fond ton cœur mystérieux;
 Parce que ton amour a glorifié mes yeux;

Je ne me souviens plus des cités où nous sommes,
 Ni de l'ombre du temps qui suit les pas des hommes,
 Ni du mystère obscur où se courbe la foi:
 Je ne sais rien qu'un Dieu caché qui parle en moi.

THE LITTLE SISTER OF DAISY D.

By THEODORE J. GRAYSON

KINDRED, the night editor, swept off his eyeshade with a vicious motion of his left hand, and beckoned to me with his grimy right, between the first and second fingers of which there smoked a long black cigar.

"Here, Horven!" he called.

I came and stood beside him.

"Miss Crandall is on the wire. She wants to 'phone in a column of 'Daisy D.' stuff from the Charity Ball. You listen and do the write-up."

Quickly I took the receiver. "Hello!" I said.

"Hello, yourself!" came back the curt, crisp answer. In such manner I made the acquaintance of "Daisy D."

I was a new man on the *Globe* in those days, and this girl, who was to me a novelty, was an institution to the other newspaper men.

She had dropped into the *Globe* office three years before, from God knows where, and in ten minutes had convinced quick-witted Jim Whalen, on the city desk, that he needed her at twenty per.

At first she did social happenings and Sunday supplements, but when she had managed to induce Jim to give her her head a bit she started that "Daisy D." column, and then, figuratively speaking, her fortune was made.

Somehow or other she had learned just the sort of semi-pathetic balderdash that shopgirls like to digest every evening, holding the paper about six inches from the nose, with an exchange ticket in the other hand and a wad of gum in the mouth.

Then she came it smooth over Gelder, the managing editor, one night

when she met him casually at the theater, and before he realized it she had wormed permission out of him to give a newsboys' parade and dinner on Thanksgiving, she to play Lady Bountiful!

That was a great event, that dinner! The beneficiaries said so, and they should have known. It brought unaccustomed pleasure and creature comfort to hundreds of dirty urchins, and incidentally it featured "Daisy D." in every part of the town. How she stood on a balcony, with flushing cheeks and sparkling eyes, waving an American flag and leading the singing was vividly described in our columns, while several of our competitors felt called upon to give grudging accounts, all of which, as "Daisy D." sagely remarked, "helped some!" She moved up to twenty-five on the strength of it, anyway, and all the boys began kicking themselves because they hadn't thought of it first.

Then old Chung Wu, the great Chinese statesman, came to town, and a select coterie of us cooled our heels in his ante-chamber and listened to the polite denials of his almond-eyed secretary that he had anything of the least interest to say. After which fiasco Whalen, in his own vernacular, "sicked Daisy on him!" Did she cool her heels anywhere? Well, I guess not. She hired the most expensive rig she could find—on the *Globe*, of course—borrowed a fearful and wonderful frock from a friend in the "continuous," and in half an hour was smoking cigarettes with the old scoundrel on the plea that they had been brother and sister when her husband was secretary of the Russian Legation at Bangkok!

And then the Ashford bankruptcy! That was a pippin! Whalen couldn't get a line on that for ever so long. Frawley, the referee, must have been taken into camp by the press in early life, for he wouldn't let a soul into the hearing room but the interested parties, their lawyers and the stenographers—and thereby hangs a tale! At the third hearing a new stenographer appeared, a buxom, bright-eyed girl, who kept her big blonde head bent assiduously above her notebook. (I saw it later. It had a bully picture of old Frawley in it!) When the hearing had closed, Frawley, in his best manner, explained that he had been obliged to secure additional stenographic assistance, and suggested that a fee from the fund be allowed Miss Crandall for her services, and all the lawyers present took a good look, and no one objected to the appropriation! Daisy said afterwards that it was like finding money in a letter, and we spent an unprofitable half-hour trying to find out how she worked the referee, but she wouldn't give up a thing. She was always tight on her methods. They were hers, she said; the results belonged to the paper.

Gradually I got to know Daisy better than the other men. From fellow workers we became friends. She was not beautiful, but she was fine-looking in a large sort of way, and she knew how to wear her clothes. Everyone could see that she had knocked about considerably before she reached the *Globe*, and she could handle men. Up to the limit she was all "jolly," but after that—well, no one tried to find out after Gordon, our lively masher, was laid up for two days with a damaged eye. Oh, yes, Daisy could take care of herself all right, all right!

She lived three flights up, in two rooms and a bath. It was hardly an apartment; Daisy called it a "shack." This abode she shared for a while with a buck-and-wing dancer named Geraldine, until they split over some new cigarettes which Geraldine refused to sacrifice on the altar of friendship. After the rumpus Daisy lived alone until Mariana came.

And now that we have come to Mariana, we are, as the children say, "getting warm."

I was banging away at the typewriter one evening, trying to bat out a theatrical assignment in short order, so as to get away to a smoker at the Priory, when I heard "Daisy D." speaking to me.

"Mr. Horven," she said—"Mr. Horven."

I swung around in my shirt sleeves and involuntarily reached for my coat. I had seen her companion!

Beside Daisy's broad-shouldered, erect figure, just out of the glare from the row of brilliant hanging bulbs suspended above the horseshoe of typewriters and pounding, perspiring reporters, stood the quaintest little girl I have ever seen. She was just a rosy little country lass, fresh from the fields, utterly unsophisticated and out of place among her present surroundings. In the brief glimpse I had of her I noted that she had a strange, wild-flower beauty which made a direct and powerful appeal.

Daisy meanwhile eyed me closely, as if to divine my thoughts.

"This is my sister, Mariana," she said quietly. "Shake hands with Mr. Horven, Mariana."

Quite bewildered, I took the hand which the younger girl shyly tendered me, looking the while at Daisy for some explanation. She interpreted my gaze and hurried on:

"I have seen Mr. Whalen about her, and she is to do work on the household page until she learns the ropes. I said I would look after her, and I will!"

And look after her Daisy certainly did. It was a nice thing, a mighty nice thing, the way she lugged that child around. There never was a prettier bit of green goods in town than Mariana Crandall; she was about as fit for newspaper work as I am to lead the Boston Symphony, and Daisy knew it! But do you think she admitted it? Not on your life! She took Mariana to her bosom like an old tabby with one kitten, and the boys all learned to keep clear of her claws.

It was a standing joke around the office, the way she fussed over her *protégée*, who would have been fired time and again, by the way, had Whalen not been morally certain that Daisy would stalk out behind her in outraged dignity the minute she got the sliding board. But he refused Daisy a slight raise on the strength of it, saying that he was paying two salaries to keep her, as it was. Daisy made no comment on his outburst; she understood fast enough.

Then, as luck would have it, Whalen sent Mariana to cover an afternoon reception to some big gun, which he thought she couldn't mess up very much, as she could get almost all she needed from the policeman at the awning and the darkey in the hall.

I was sitting in the local room with Daisy when she got back. Her eyes were like stars, and she scribbled a few names on some copy paper, thrust them absently upon a boy, who took them up, returning on the run for her, and maybe she didn't get stood up on the mat and called down! But it all slid from her usually super-sensitive soul like a squall from a mercerized raincoat, and she returned to her desk to rewrite with the same seraphic smile on her lips and the same vacant look in her big brown eyes. Well, she couldn't do it, and in the end Daisy and I faked it for her, and then hustled her around to the French restaurant for a bite and explanations.

"What's the matter with you, Mariana?" Daisy peremptorily demanded, as we cut thick slices from the long Vienna loaf and sipped our thin *consommé en tasse*.

"Nothing," Mariana replied sweetly, with the same slow, absent-from-the-flesh kind of smile.

"Perhaps you like to raise Whalen from his usual slothful lethargy?" I ventured, in an effort to be facetious. Again the smile.

In the end it came out, but not there, you can wager. The eternal feminine was too strong in Mariana; she was furnishing no observation case in heart trouble for my inspection—not she!

Daisy told me all about it next day at the Sheepshead track, where we were doing the notables. Daisy said it took all night to get the story, and from the way her eyes looked I knew she was handing me a straight tip. The seraphic smile was a man—that was all; Mariana insisted it was enough. No, she had never seen him before; she didn't know his name, nor anything about him, except that she had heard that he was press agent for the Ryndham Theater; but in telling her tale Daisy said she managed to identify him with the orchids piled near the front door, and to endow with his leading and most pleading characteristics the chicken salad which was served at the back of the house.

"I'm worried to death," Daisy confided to me, "for it seems they were introduced, though Mariana doesn't in the least recollect his name, and he obtained permission to call tomorrow afternoon to take her to some picture exhibition, and later to tea. It was certainly a case of remarkable fascination, for the child is quite daffy about him, and as for me"—Daisy paused a second and chewed her program viciously—"I simply must see him and find out who he is!"

"I'd like to, myself," I added truthfully, "for he must be a forty horsepower Galahad of this year's model to play such havoc with the kid."

"Well, why don't you see him, then?" Daisy ventured, tapping her foot impatiently. The ponies were lining up for the sixth race, but she paid no attention. "Drop over to the Ryndham for something or other and take me with you."

The result of Daisy's suggestion was that next morning she and I climbed through a narrow passage back of the ticket window out into the big, darkened auditorium, which smelled abominably of stale musk, and watched a musical comedy company in old clothes going through their stunts as fast as an apopleptic manager would let them. It was funny to watch their antics, and I was enjoying the scene hugely, as was Daisy also, for her low laugh rippled

out beside me with increasing frequency. Suddenly, however, I felt a vicious grip on my arm. I turned like a shot to find out who had hold of me, and in sheer amazement saw that it was Daisy.

She was staring at a big, handsome fellow who had just sauntered out from the wings and was standing idly to the right of the stage manager, watching the show.

"What is it, Daisy?" I whispered, my lips close to her ear, for the chorus was roaring away for dear life.

Daisy did not look at me, nor did she relax her grip upon my arm. "Get me out of here," she said.

Outside, I was pretty badly scared; I had never seen Daisy weaken before. At first I thought she would faint, for she was the color of paper, but she pulled herself together pluckily, after leaning hard on me for a moment or so, and then turned and started to walk slowly away. I said nothing, but followed at her side. At last she glanced at me with a pitiful, challenging smile, one of those smiles which never gets north of the nose.

"It was very hot in there, wasn't it, Mr. Horven? I think the heat must have affected me."

I knew well enough it wasn't the heat, but I had enough decency to let it go at that.

"But how about this Ryndham press agent?" I suggested. "You still want to see him, don't you?"

Quickly she turned her head so that I should not see her face, and when she spoke her voice sounded harshly.

"Never again! Never again in my whole life!"

We said nothing further on the subject, but the thought flashed instantly through my mind:

"Ah, my lady, so that was the man!"

We separated almost immediately, and I did not see Daisy again until we reported for assignments in the early afternoon. As we left the local room, she bound for a medical congress and I to see a man who claimed he had discovered the real secret of aerial naviga-

tion, Daisy turned to me and asked with considerable hesitation:

"Have you anything specially doing around dinner time, Mr. Horven?"

"No, indeed," I assured her, scenting a possible connection between her question and the scene of the morning. "What do you want me to do?"

"Take me out to dinner. Do you mind?"

"Charmed!" I replied, running over mentally my available funds, and then, to polish off my bluff, I carelessly added, "Any preference as to place?"

Again Daisy hesitated. "Morceaux's," she said finally, and I gasped inside. "But I'll square this up with you mighty soon. I hate to butt in on a party for myself like this, but I've just got to be there, and you've been bully to me." Again her clear eye sought mine. "Do you mind?"

What could a man do under such circumstances? I still think with pride of the sincerity which I threw into my assurances of pleasure at the opportunity Daisy was affording me. Then we went our ways, and I, for my part, let my aeronaut wait till I had hocked my ancestral timepiece until pay day with a member of the dominant race. It is a function with me to dine at Morceaux's.

Seven o'clock found me in my glad rags waiting for Daisy in the restaurant lounge and fingering the greenback roll of Israel which reposed in my right trouser pocket; it gave me confidence.

She came presently, and I admit I was astonished. We had dined together before, but not at Morceaux's.

She was gowned in some soft, clinging black material, shimmering over all its length with golden sequins. (I found later it was borrowed from Susie Madden, of the "legit.") This was topped by an enormous black picture hat with three sweeping ostrich plumes. Then, too, she wore a very becoming color, which it would take an old stager to discover was nature assisted by art; as a matter of fact, she was quite pale about the edges. Altogether, it was a new and wonderful "Daisy D." whom Gaston, the distinguished head waiter,

greeted with his best bow as we stood upon the threshold of his Epicurean bower.

It's a wonderful sight—Morceaux's between seven and nine, and later, too, for that matter. The wealth of light and color, the white and gold of the walls, the soft red of the carpet, the close smell of many flowers and much scent, and over all a sort of gray haze through which the dark coats of the men and the white shoulders of the women flash now and again. The world plays at Morceaux's, and, as is always the case, he who plays must pay.

Like a general surveying the field of battle before sending his troops into action, "Daisy D," stood in the door, and swept the gay, varicolored scene with her eyes. Finally her gaze became concentrated, and throwing Gaston a brilliant smile, she pointed to a small side table half hidden by green, protecting palms.

"There!" she said.

"But, mademoiselle," Gaston expostulated with Latin polish and volubility, "it is too bad, it is most regrettable, but that table is reserved!"

Daisy looked at me meaningly, and I rose to her fly. A fresh green note passed from my pocket to Gaston's obsequious palm, and of a sudden he bethought him of a way to overcome that awkward reservation.

There was a little stir as we seated ourselves, and it was not until Daisy had sealed the order with her approval, and our waiter had sped silently away to fill it, that I had an opportunity to look about me. When I did I understood many things.

Close beside me, partially hidden, it is true, by a bulky rubber plant, sat Mariana and her friend of the Ryndham. So utterly engrossed were they with one another that they had not noticed our entrance, and were even then unaware of our proximity. He was leaning across the table in his most devoted manner, his handsome eyes fixed intently on the sweet, flushed face of Daisy's little sister. Involuntarily I glanced up at Daisy, and in her eyes read a great determination. I said

nothing to her about the other couple—something in her look forbade it, but I noticed that as our meal progressed she hardly touched the tempting food and allowed course after course to be removed almost untasted. But she went it pretty strong on the champagne, which was unusual, for Daisy is an abstemious soul. All the time she watched the others closely out of the corner of her eye. Several times she seemed on the point of making some move, and then apparently reconsidered it. For me the situation was of intense interest. I was viewing a smiling tragedy amid the soft strains of the orchestra and the heavy scent of many flowers.

Finally Daisy's white fingers closed tightly on the stem of her glass, and I knew she was going to do it. Turning her head slightly she called our waiter.

"Please move that rubber plant," she requested; "it worries me!"

With a bow the man beckoned to another waiter, and in a moment the screen was gone. Daisy had kept her eyes upon Mariana's escort, and as the plant was moved his attention was attracted by the commotion; he looked up, and their eyes met. Instantly the man went as white as the woman was under her rouge, but he made no sign, no motion of recognition. Then Mariana saw her sister, and bowed graciously, with a merry laugh. Daisy nodded to her briefly; then she rose and I with her. I could see that her knees were shaking. With a certain quiet dignity I had never noticed before, she stepped to the other table, the occupants of which were so surprised they did not even rise.

"Good evening, Mr. Askom," she said in a frigid but perfectly courteous tone. The man, in great embarrassment, muttered something that was quite inaudible to me a few steps away. For a brief instant Daisy took the hand he grudgingly extended, and then she smiled a hard, set smile, and went on:

"This is my friend Mr. Horven, of the *Globe*." Askom and I bowed stiffly. "Curious that we should have met here"

accidentally." Did Daisy accent that, or was it my nerves? "It is so nice of you to have been kind to my little sister." She laid her hand gently on Mariana's shoulder and looked earnestly down at her. Mariana was sitting in uncomprehending silence. She could see that the wheels were going, but she did not understand the machinery. Blindly she resented Daisy's interference; she had been so happy! "And do tell me," Daisy continued, with ever so slight a catch in her voice, "how Mrs. Askom and your dear little boy are? Have you heard lately?"

There was dead silence for an instant; it was as though Daisy had dropped a bomb! Then with a gasp Mariana started to rise, her face and neck crimson, her eyes flashing. But Daisy's hand on her shoulder was full of nervous strength and kept her down. I alone could guess the agony the older girl was enduring. Rigid and Juno-like she stood awaiting Askom's answer.

Perfectly aware of her object by this time, the big fellow rose to his feet with a brutal laugh.

"Very well, when last I heard, Miss Crandall," he said. "They will appreciate your asking for them," he added banteringly.

By the way Daisy winced I could see how the shot told, but all she said was,

"That is nice. I am so glad to hear it. And now, Mr. Askom, I won't trouble you to take Mariana home; she will return with me."

Askom seemed to take this for granted, for he barely glanced at Mariana, who was sitting quite still, her head in her hands, staring straight before her.

"Good evening to you all," he said in his nastiest tone, as he coolly received his change from the waiter and handed him a tip. The women said nothing, so I stepped into the breach. "Good evening!" I said, but he was already gone.

As we drove uptown later with Mariana, silent and distressed, huddled into a corner of the carriage, Daisy leaned over to me and pressed my hand with firm, cold fingers.

"I can never thank you enough for this," she whispered. "I trusted you and you stood by me nobly."

"But, good Lord!" I whispered back, "I did nothing! Think what you did for that child! Think of the sacrifice you made!"

In the darkness I could feel Daisy press my hand with sorrowful fervor, and her voice was very tender.

"She is my little sister, and had I had an older sister at her age . . ." She paused, and I could feel her tremble.

"I might have less to regret," concluded "Daisy D."



LOSS

By C. L. CRITTENTON

THE sky leans over the dumb dry land;
The finger of sunset points its hand;
My parched up heart will not expand
For my love is gone from my sight.
Give me water that I may drink,
Give me thoughts that I may think,
Give me my love again!

GATES AJAR

By H. G. BISHOP

OUR cab had just passed the *Herald* building, going south on Broadway, when the touring car struck it from behind. I was pitched headlong out over the horse, and seemed to be suspended in the air, when the granite pavement rose suddenly and smote me full on the side of the head and I passed into oblivion.

It was not hard work getting accustomed to being a spirit. The difficulty lies in describing my condition, and my sensations, for never having experienced such a condition, we have no words in the language to do justice to the occasion. I can probably convey some idea by describing what I was *not*. In the first place, there was nothing tangible, as we understand the word, about me. I was a nothingness of no length or breadth or thickness, yet I was all there with an individuality and a personality that I could experience and which the other spirits could perceive and experience. Jim Hooper and I talked this over later on, and we came to the conclusion that it must be "inwardness," or some fourth dimension unknown to mortals. However, be that as it may, I was a full-fledged spirit, ghost, spook or what not, and as good a one as any I met up with. Next, I could neither see, hear, smell, taste nor feel. I had, however, some sixth sense which included all of these, and a lot of other senses of which we know nothing. Also, I had no emotions such as anger, fear, or joy, nor any sensation of time or space. There was no such thing as time. Things just moved along or stood still or went backward as I wanted them to do, and fitted in per-

fectly with what every other spook wanted, no matter how diverse their respective views of the matter.

Well, as I said, I slid into the angel job mighty easily. Thirty seconds after I had hit that Broadway pavement I was taking things quiet like and watching the fuss.

First the cab ran away and got more smashed up; then the crowd collected around me and the machine; the cops came running, gathered in the auto party and rung up the patrol and ambulance. Somebody threw some water in my face, and a fat, pompous individual who said he was a doctor felt of my pulse and announced that I was dead, all right, with a broken neck. Pretty soon the ambulance came, and not feeling much interest in the further proceedings, I turned to go away, when I bumped square into Jim Hooper. Jim and I had always been hand in glove ever since we were at Princeton, until Jim fell out of a canoe one day up at some lake in Maine and got drowned a few years before my untimely demise.

We shook hands spook fashion and meandered over to the Hotel Regal to talk things over.

Although I had been dead only about four minutes, I knew everything about the spirit business—it all comes, the minute you turn into a ghost—still there were a few questions I wanted to ask Jim, so we sat down in the café and watched the starched bosom behind the bar hand out his dope. Billy Hutchins was in there with two bibulous Western friends, and Billy was getting more than was good for him. An hour before I'd have been mighty worried about him, for Billy has a fine

little wife and I'd probably have taken him home, but it was all immaterial to me now.

Jim told me a lot about the boys who had "gone before," and we called up a few of them and had quite a jolly party. You see, they all knew that I was due to get in just when I did, and were waiting around to give me the glad hand. After a while we sent 'em away—you can do that sort of thing to a spook, you know; they never get mad—and then I asked Jim about the pater, who had departed mundane life some ten years ago.

"Your honored and respected father," said Jim, "is no longer a spirit. He has, in other words, departed this life and returned to earth. You see," he went on to say, "we are all subject to the Law, and the Law in your father's case decreed that he should return to earthly existence about four years ago. He is a small boy now, and lives with his parents over on East Thirty-ninth Street."

I asked Jim just what he meant by the Law.

"Well," said he, "the Law is what runs all this spook business. It is that which is decreed, which is fixed, which is bound to happen. You add two and two and you get four; you touch a hot iron with your finger and the finger is burned; you pour oil and water together and they will not mix. The Law is that which *is*; which *always has been*; which *always will be*, like time and space and eternity, all fixed and immovable and certain to occur. Would you like to see your father?" he asked, and upon my replying in the affirmative we got on a car and rode up as far as the Grand Central Station. From there we walked down to Thirty-ninth Street and went into a plain, unpretentious flat.

Now, my last recollection of my father was that of a gray-headed man, nearly fifty years old, who always wore a silk hat and passed the plate in church on Sundays. Imagine the shock to my feelings—if a ghost has any feelings—when I saw the governor in kilts seated on the floor of the nursery crooning to

himself and playing with a toy engine and cars. Being a spook, I knew the old gentleman in an instant, and was glad he looked so healthy. Just as we were leaving the nurse came to put him to bed, and the last we heard was a series of vociferous wails as he was hustled into his nightie.

About this time Jim had to leave me to keep an engagement, and I started out on my own account.

A little girl selling papers at a corner news stand I recognized as my dear departed Aunt Jane; a bartender in the Imperial, as a once noted Fifth Avenue divine, and a nighthawk perched on his cab in front of a theater, as an ex-President of the United States.

However, as it was getting late, I concluded I would turn in for the night, and as Tom Dwyer was in the country and his apartments up at the St. Anne were unoccupied, I decided to go there.

On my way I passed Katherine Clements's house, and the impulse came over me to drop in and see Katherine and her husband. I had once been pretty well smitten on Katherine before she married Clements, and I still felt some personal interest in her and hers.

There was no one below when I entered their hallway, but hearing voices above, I metaphorically tiptoed up the stairs, for a spook has no sense of shame, you know. There were voices a-plenty above, or rather one voice a-plenty. Katherine was in her dressing gown, her hair uncoiled, and, ye gods! was that *all* she had? That wealth of golden tresses—the hair that once I had thought was the most beautiful in the world—well, most of it was lying on her dressing table; and John, poor John Clements! Apparently he had just come in, and apparently, also, he had done something; he stood there, meek and silent as a lamb, while Katherine, the kind, the gentle, the sweet-tempered Katherine of my youth, was handing it out to him in words clipped to a scant quarter-inch and coming four at every tick of the watch. Some remaining sense of mundane shame came over me, and I beat it hurriedly for the street.

I was just about to enter Tommy Dwyer's apartment when Jim came rushing up again.

"Do you remember Louise Appleby?" he exclaimed.

"Do I remember Lou?" I replied—"that dainty, immaculate, good little Lou? Of course I do. Got killed in an auto accident last winter. Where is she?"

"Well, don't get so excited, old spook," he broke in. "You know what a traveler Lou always was? Orphan. No home in particular. Lots of money. Always on the go. Well, when she blew in here last winter she couldn't settle down—not a bit. We fellows wanted to be nice to her, but, first thing we knew, she had dug up some old departed aunt of hers to chaperone and lit out touring space, Neptune, the Milky Way, Orion, the Pleiades and way stations. Well, she got back tonight. Just seen her and talked to her. You see, the Law has her, and she had to return."

"Going back to earth, I suppose," said I.

"Yep, going back to old New York, and right away, so I've heard. Want to see her?" he asked.

I assented, and we went over to the Circle and turned west into Sixtieth Street, a few moments later entering one of the tenements and ascending to the fourth floor.

The room we brought up in was brightly lighted and seemed quite neat and respectable for the abiding place of a poor family. There were white curtains at the windows, and on the table was a single geranium in a tin can. Several pop-eyed children of various ages stood about gazing interestedly at the bed and its occupants.

"We have arrived too late to have

discourse with Lou," remarked Jim, after he had taken a survey of the surroundings; "she has already passed into a state of innocuous desuetude."

We had, in truth, arrived a little late. The happy event had already taken place, and mother and child appeared to be doing well. There was no mistaking Lou in the infant.

Suddenly a chill swept over me. It was like an immense icy hand folding me in a clammy embrace. I started violently. Jim looked at me critically for a moment, and then, with thinly veiled amusement, remarked, "So you savvy *your* finish, do you?"

"Lord, yes!" I shrieked. "The Law has got me, too. It's to be *twins*, and I'm it for the second baby. Me for the timber!" and I bolted. Near the foot of the stairs a rickety step caught some ghostly projection on my spook figure and I went headlong the rest of the way.

There was a roaring in my ears, a jangling of bells and I sat up stupefied and opened my spook eyes. There was the red touring car that had rammed us, the smashed cab lying over to one side; there were the cops and the curious but sympathetic New York street crowd walled about me, but now opening up to let the ambulance in.

"Pretty hard knock you got, young man," the fat man who claimed to be a doctor was saying.

"Gee," piped a newsboy, "dis ambulance beat it here all de way from Roosevelt in tree minutes!"

I looked up at the girl kneeling beside me. Her hat was crushed; her gown was soiled and torn; but it was the same dainty, the same incomparable . . . "Lou," I said, "let's try another cab," and, *sotto voce*, "to anywhere but Sixtieth Street, West."



FOOLS rush in where angels fear to wed.

HAZARD'S LEAP

By MELVILLE CHATER

WHEN the Atalantic-Italian liner *Gruneswald* had been exactly five hours at sea, Tom Hazard, of North Carolina, scraped a deck acquaintance with Rhoda Scarthey, of New York, and fell in love with her. That is to say, he approached with, "Mayn't I move that steamer chair for you?" and within half an hour was seated beside her, talking of the emptiness of life.

There is, we know, a very devil in the moon at times. There is, we must believe, a full legion of them in the ocean, for be it remembered that it is the natural element of Idalion Aphrodite, who was washed ashore on the waves. Yet, even subtracting the influence of an ocean voyage, there was no earthly reason why Rhoda should not have loved young Hazard, except that she was rather more than half engaged to a very honest, everyday young fellow, by name Charley Brown, who had taken an afternoon off from the Belgium Bank that he might pilgrimage unto the Atalantic-Italian docks and cram her stateroom with roses. Save for this, indeed, there was every reason in Tom's favor. Miss Scarthey, an art student bound for three months of the Italian galleries, was essentially a girl of temperament. Hazard was a tall, dark, magnetic looking boy. He had won dozens of track trophies, and the gold medal on his watch chain represented an endurance swim in the Cape Fear River. As for temperament, it overloaded him. His trouble was that he had the soul of a poet, but could not write poetry. Being unable to vent his emotions by making bad verses and reading them to his friends,

he managed it in even more desperate and unpleasant ways. In the present instance Miss Scarthey was the victim.

Day by day they sat in their chairs on the promenade deck; and day by day Tom slid from the tale of his troubles into the tale of his love, while Miss Scarthey slid from sheer pity into that other thing to which it is akin. "Always in hard luck, always in love," was the toast they had given him at the Brunswick Club on the eve of his departure; and by some natural law of recompense an unfortunate man finds a deep, almost uncanny, fascination in a woman's eyes. Tom told Rhoda the first half of the toast, but not the last. Nightly until seven bells and onward she learned that, had he but met her five years before, life would have been so very different. As Tom was but twenty-one, it will be seen that his temperament began to evince itself at a tender age.

"Poor Tom!" Mrs. Hazard had always sighed over his escapades; "he can't help it, he's so highly strung." Whereto brutal men had been overheard to rejoin, *sotto voce*, that if he didn't turn over a new leaf he'd be a something-sight more highly strung one of these days. Tom's latest feat, based on an ill advised bet, had been to hold up a harmless way train in proper Western style. True, the passengers recovered their valuables three stations further down the line in a flour sack which had been thrown there by a masked man as he dashed by in an automobile; but young Hazard's hand in the affair was more than half guessed, and public feeling raged until his uncle, a prosperous mill owner, said, "Young

man, I reckon the world's the only thing that'll knock the nonsense out of you. Cash this cheque and go away somewhere. Don't come back till you've spent it all—and spend it slowly."

The idea that imbedded itself with fatal firmness in Tom's mind within twenty-four hours after he had met Miss Scarthey was that she had been especially born and delivered to him by Providence to be his guiding star, his guardian angel, his—but there are over forty ways of saying it. When a woman hears herself called a guardian angel it is difficult for her not to behave like one; moreover, there is an unwritten law that, during an ocean voyage, a girl need not mention her engagement unless she chooses. Of course, on land this would be very, very wrong. Rhoda did not choose, and the result was the most desperate deck courtship that the old *Gruneswald's* black and red funnels had ever witnessed.

The artistic temperament is a very elastic, self-deceptive thing. Rhoda, measuring young Hazard's emotions by her own, was quite confident that nothing fatally serious was going on within him, and for this reason, though he interested her far more than did the other man at home, the divine sparker refused to work; honest, simple minded Charley Brown worshiped her footprints, wherefore she thought the world of Charley and was very good to him. That is the way with the artistic temperament.

At the end of a week Rhoda realized that, even taking the ocean and moonlight into consideration, the thing had gone somewhat too far, so she got Kitty Orton, her traveling chum, to hint delicately at the existence of Another. Hazard refused to believe it. If Rhoda had been born and destined for him, he asked, how *could* there be Another? Then Rhoda bluntly told him of her engagement. Any sensible, seagoing man would have denounced her in proper fashion and fallen in love with someone else, for there was still a week left; but the truth is that, under all, Tom drew a

secret, gloating satisfaction from tragic life just as a hysterical woman enjoys tears, so he plunged in all the more deeply. He told Rhoda that her engagement must have been due to some horrible mistake, that she couldn't have known her own mind; and he carried on at such an alarming rate that at last Rhoda was forced to say, "Really, Tom, this thing has gone too far. I had no idea that you felt so about it, or I should certainly have spoken before. You'll understand, I'm sure, if we don't see quite so much of each other hereafter."

For two days she remained conscientiously in her stateroom; and for two days Hazard paced the deck with a desperately set face, signed more bar checks than were good for him and wrote notes in the smoking room; which notes were entrusted to Miss Orton and invariably returned by her unopened. On the third night he did not go down to dinner, but sat hunched up in a dark corner of the lower deck until six bells, eating the bitter bread of despair.

The *Gruneswald* had sighted the Azores that morning, and was now plowing along with Mt. Pico astern and San Jorge lifting his high shoulder off the port bow.

Some men seek to drown their sorrows in drink, others in the ocean. Tom had tried only the first so far, and it had merely served to magnify his woes. Deep down in his nature there lay a peculiarly melodramatic mood which, though it gathered and dissolved as swiftly as a thunderstorm, seemed no less real while it endured. He thought of the past, and it appeared a thing of wasted youth and blighted hopes; of the future that stretched before him like the salt, dreary ocean; he thought of his relatives, and that which until yesterday had seemed quite a handsome boon on the part of Uncle James now loomed into a cruel plot to rid the family of his intolerable presence. Outcast that he was, he stared astern at Mt. Pico's grim, gaunt shape and compared himself therewith. Yes, though it is hard to believe in cold blood, he

actually compared himself to that lonely, burned-out volcano. Then he turned to the opposite shore, with its stretch of twinkling, uphill lights—for the liners pass within a mile or two of San Jorge—each one of which, he reflected, represented the happy fireside of some husband and wife, with little ones clustered about their knees.

Seven bells were striking when Kitty Orton entered her friend's stateroom and tendered another note.

"I met him walking up and down the deck," she explained in shaken tones. "He pushed this into my hand and said, 'I'll expect an answer in half an hour. There'll be an answer. There must be one.' Really, his face quite frightened me."

"Take it back," commanded Rhoda, sitting up in her bunk. "I won't even touch it. He's one of those boys who take sudden fancies and recover just as suddenly. You'll see; he'll walk it off when he gets ashore at Gibraltar and'll be comfortably making love to that peroxide girl from Detroit by the time we're in the Mediterranean."

Kitty did not seem convinced; she murmured the possibility of "something desperate." Rhoda laughed and called her a dear, simple old thing.

"Bless you, I know his kind; he just takes it out in feeling, not doing. Come to bed and don't worry. I'll send this back tomorrow morning."

And meanwhile Tom waited, leaning against the taffrail on the deserted deck, until he knew that for him there was no tomorrow. The cup was filled—the die was cast—the demon of despair had him in thrall. Behind him was the dreary, barren thing called life; below was the great, kind ocean lapping its promise of dreamless sleep. Miss Orton approached and handed back his letter with some words that he hardly heard; then she passed and was lost in the darkness.

In another moment he had mounted the rail and plunged to death.

This is all quite commonplace; the one interesting point is that as he rose to the surface he experienced a peculiar

psychological change. Somehow life did not look quite so dreary as before, nor did the ocean feel in the smallest degree like dreamless sleep, and his clothes sogged unpleasantly. He caught himself wishing that he had removed his shoes. It has been mentioned that he owned swimming medals.

"To live or die?" he cried, turning his agonized face to the stars. Now, the shore lights had rather a pleasing look and the water was very salt and cold.

He swam.

Next morning the note was returned to Rhoda by the deck steward, who had found it lying near the port taffrail. Hazard's absence at breakfast was commented upon, and later in the day his stateroom was found to be empty and his bunk unpressed. Also there were three unfinished letters of the last farewell type addressed to relatives. Nothing was said officially, but the smoking room steward talked and the bedroom steward talked, and that evening when the captain looked in and said, "What, nobody at the piano? Give us a song, doctor!" it fell as flat as a practical joke at a funeral.

The Fiend of the Hideously Appropriate prompted the doctor to sing, "A Life on the Ocean Wave." One woman even wept.

Rhoda missed this; she was still downstairs having the horrors over Hazard's final appeal, with the realization that last night's refusal to read had cost a human life. She found herself to be a heartless, cold-blooded creature unworthy of any good man's love.

"To think, Kitty!" she cried, "oh, to think—that man loved me deeply, understandingly, as no other man ever has or ever will again. But I doubted him; I measured him by my own fickle, unstable nature. Yes, I laughed at him. The great love came into my life and I rejected it, wrecked it. Oh, I am not fit to live; I could die, die!"

In fact, the memory of honest, cheerful, hard-working Charley Brown had become slightly blurred.

For two days she sat on deck apart

from the rest, gazing sternward, very wan and silent. The third morning found the *Gruneswald* lying under the lee of a great brown rock shaped like a reclining camel. Rhoda suffered herself to be wedged aboard an overcrowded transport and steamed across for a three hours' view of Gibraltar. Kitty skipped along like a young, unpenned lamb, rejoicing in the wooded heights, the gardens, the quaint, bazaar-like street with its multitude of Algerians, Spaniards, Turks and British Tommies; then they chartered a queer little yellow carriage and drove across to the old Spanish town and back again.

"You've said hardly a word," commented Kitty, as they whipped through a horde of greasy mendicants near the barrier. "You must cheer up, Rhoda; it's nonsense. Oh, just look at Algieras glittering over there across the water, like a white diamond!" She stopped suddenly and seized her friend's hand. "Now, Rhoda!"

"Yes, it's bub-bub-beautiful." Rhoda was sobbing quietly.

"It was one of those bub-bub-beg-gars," she explained. "He reminded me of a story that Tom told, the night before he . . . Oh, let's get back to the ship!"

Kitty bought an English newspaper for diversion, but the matter was not improved when they stumbled upon a report from San Jorge, in the Azores, that the body of an unknown man had been washed ashore two days previous.

There followed three days along the dim Spanish and Sardinian coasts, and at last the blue, sunlit bay with the green slopes of the Posilipo, dotted with villas, on one hand, and the ghostly outline of Vesuvius towering on the other. For a week they wandered about lazy, slummy, good-natured Naples, visited the Museo, strolled in the Villa Nazionale and toured the bay from Castellamare to Salerno; while from first to last Kitty did all the talking.

"Beautiful," Rhoda would assent wearily; "oh, yes, of course it's very beautiful, I suppose."

"Now, see here," Kitty responded sternly, "you're just ruining this trip—

not half noticing the things you've waited all these years to see. Come, brace up, take an interest in life."

"I can't. I simply can't," sighed the other. "There's something gone, something I can never forget or replace. Oh, if you only knew what I've suffered! Kitty, for heaven's sake let's go—go anywhere so long as it's away from here!"

They started next day for Rome. There things were no better. Kitty went sightseeing alone and Rhoda spent most of her time moping about the Pincian Hill gardens; she visited the Forum but once, covering it in twenty minutes, and complained that seeing ruins always made her feel morbid and unhappy. She was restless to be up and gone long before Kitty had exhausted the starred "objects of especial interest" in Baedeker, his book. Florence followed, with its quaint, narrow streets, overhanging *loggias* and red domed Duomo. After the preliminary drive recommended by Baedeker, Rhoda took solitary walks in the Cascine Gardens, and not even Giotto's frescoes in Santa Croce were sufficient to arouse her.

"Churches," she sighed, "more churches! Must it really be done? Yes, I visited the Casa di Bardi, and the thought came to me: 'Oh, to live among the peasants, doing good, as Romola did, and forget the world!'"

Now, when one is supposed to be having a joyous, care-free time, such viewpoints are apt to strain even the best traveling partnerships. The break came at Bologna, more in sorrow than in anger. Kitty kissed her friend good-bye, declaring that everything would smooth itself out and that she would find the old, happy Rhoda in New York next winter. The other sighed, shook her head and started alone on love's pilgrimage.

"Whew!" murmured Kitty, watching the train roll out; "these five good weeks I've felt like a tragic actress touring with an Ibsen-Maeterlinck repertoire. Thank heaven!"

Save for a sentimental journey to the antiquated horse trough which is called

by courtesy Juliet's tomb, Rhoda made straight for Lisbon, where she took ship for San Jorge in the Azores. Of course she had missed Venice and Milan, she had spoiled Naples, Rome and Florence for herself and had not seen half of the pictures that had once seemed life's ultimate goal; yet still her heart galloped onward, for San Jorge was in sight.

Her program was rather vague, but it included pacing up and down the lonely strand where Hazard's body had floated ashore: visiting some dim, incense-odored chapel and its quiet graveyard, to pluck a flower beneath the shadow of one nameless headstone—the same flower that would still lie upon her heart, what time, wan and hollow-eyed, she met young Charley Brown with the words:

"All is over. Something has come into my life and gone again. It can never be between us now as it once was. Forget me; forgive me if you can."

She landed at the little uphill town of white and salmon-colored houses and climbed its winding street. A church—instinctively she felt it to be *the* church—stood with open doors, so she passed within. The priest could speak no English, but he showed her the altar and a few poor sacred paintings with great pride. He had a kindly old face, and Rhoda loved to believe that it was he who had read Hazard's burial service. She passed out and came presently to a little graveyard where she found one new wooden cross planted amid the moldered gravestones. Its rudely cut inscription referred to an unknown man who had been washed ashore just six weeks ago.

Rhoda was not at all hysterical about it. She knelt by the grave and kissed it, murmuring very quietly, "I loved him—I loved him—I loved him!" There were little star-shaped yellow flowers growing all about, a few of which she picked and put inside her dress; then, suddenly feeling faint, she arose, staggered half blindly across the road and into the opposite garden, where there was the sound of voices, and said:

"Some water, please!"

Then she opened her eyes, opened them quite wide, as if something had struck her between them. The cottage was a charming little honeymoon-looking affair, trellised with flowering vines. There was a hammock slung on the veranda and in it was Tom Hazard with his arm around a very pretty little dark-eyed girl—in fact, quite all the way around her. They looked extremely comfortable.

When Hazard observed the intruder he arose quickly, seeming to be about to say several thousand things at once. What he did say at last, in an utterly imbecile, offhand manner, was this:

"We—ha, ha!—we were married yesterday."

The shock was so great to Rhoda that she did not faint after all.

It proved to have been a very pretty romance. Tom had neared shore in an exhausted condition, and Rosina had swum in, dragged him out and resuscitated him. A sweet, lovely girl was Rosina, very simple and industrious, and she adored Tom. Her father was a prosperous farmer, owning many acres on the mountain top, where they plow at an angle of forty-five degrees. Tom had taught her some little English, and she could say quite nicely, with a charming, babyish accent, "Good-bye," "Come a-gain tomorrow," "I love yeou-u," and "It's a be-ooti-fool day."

The rightful owner of the grave where Rhoda picked flowers turned out to be one William G. Smith, able seaman, who had been lost overboard while in liquor.

Several days elapsed before the boat returned to Lisbon. Rosina insisted on Rhoda's staying with them meanwhile, and the two grew to like each other very much. In San Jorge there is little attention paid to formal honeymoons, and Rhoda's presence caused no jarring note. She saw the last of bride and groom on the pier one stormy morning against a background of water running white along the reefs, and the high, green uplands draped with sullen mist. At parting Rhoda gave her little

hostess a few withered yellow flowers, which the latter declared she would keep always. She kissed Rhoda twice on each cheek and said tenderly:

"I love yeou-u. Come a-gain to-morrow. It's a be-ooti-fool day."

Tom declared that they would be following soon to New York and would surely call upon her; but we love to think that, with a certain Byronic grandeur not wholly inappropriate, he lived and died on the slopes of San Jorge, which, like himself, is of volcanic origin.

Upon returning, Rhoda strove to give Charley Brown a full psychological account of all she had undergone, but she only succeeded in grieving and mystifying him.

"I don't understand a word of it," he said forlornly; "but there's only one thing that counts—that you don't care enough about me any longer to—"

"But I do!" she wailed afresh. "That's just what I've been trying to explain—that it's you whom I've really loved all the time."

Charley looked at her as if a new universe had suddenly been created.

"Then there's nothing else to it," he cried joyously, "except that I've got some Amalgamated Rubber that's up twenty points; and you know you always said you preferred September. As for that *Gruneswald* nonsense—"

He kissed her three or four times, which, after all, with a girl like Rhoda, is the best possible argument.



MY LOVE WHO SECRETLY DOTH CHERISH ME

By ETHEL M. KELLEY

MY Love, who secretly doth cherish me,
Hath yet denied me in the market place.

Soon he will come to me with troubled face,
Heavy with knowledge of his falsity,
And he will look into my eyes to see

If I am cognizant of his disgrace;

And there will be remorse in the embrace
That I shall feel shut round me shudderingly.

But since my love is stronger than his shame,

And wiser than his weakness—even so—

His lips unflinchingly will give it name,
Although his soul faints with the shame thereof,
Saying, "I have denied thee for my Love,"

And I shall answer quietly, "I know!"

SOME PERFORMANCES AND A PLAY

By CHANNING POLLOCK

FOR the past hour I have been sitting idly in my workshop trying to think of an American drama that approached greatness more nearly than does "THE EASIEST WAY."

I have looked through the indexes of various volumes of programs, histories of the stage and other books of reference, expecting every moment to find my mind and my forefinger halted at a name that would cause me to remember and exclaim: "Here, and not at the Stuyvesant Theater, is the highwater mark of the American Drama!" It is a fearsome task, this selection of any one piece of art as the best. You may announce your intention of hunting in Africa; you may drink a cocktail with your dinner; you may even enjoy yourself a little bit on Sunday without arousing the storm of protest sure to follow the employment of the word "great" in connection with the achievement of a fellow citizen, especially if that fellow citizen is not dead.

In spite of which, and notwithstanding my efforts to find another head more deserving of laurel than Eugene Walter's, I must finally take the plunge and go on record as saying that "THE EASIEST WAY" is the best play ever written by an American.

I think this admission hurts mother worse than it hurts Willie, or, at least, it is a bigger surprise to me than it can be to you. I know Eugene Walter, and you may have observed that one is never able to explain how or why one's acquaintances win success. Eight or nine years ago I sat in the "bill room" of the Walnut Street Theater, in Philadelphia, and per-

mitted Walter, then press agent of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," to bore me with reasons for the failure of his first effort, a melodrama called "Sergeant James."

"Bad management did it," asserted the disappointed author. "Never mind! I'll write a piece some day that'll make people sit up and take notice!"

"I hope so," I said, returning to the intellectual pursuit of counting half-sheet cards announcing Grace George in "Under Southern Skies." I said it in exactly the tone I should have used if somebody had told me that he could construct a practical flying machine of two ostrich feathers and a yard of linsey-woolsey.

WHY is "THE EASIEST WAY" the best play ever written by an American?

As a matter of fact, that question is rather hard to answer. The effect of the piece is so tremendous that one doesn't think of the cause. "I ask you for an opinion of my comedy," said a young author to the late Constant Coquelin, "and you go to sleep while I am reading it!"

"My dear fellow," replied Coquelin, "sleep is an opinion."

In this instance the difficulty of answering "why" is an answer. The fundamental purpose of modern drama is to exert an emotional appeal, and when that appeal is great the drama, measured by the present standard, must be great, too. No one who attended the first performance of "THE EASIEST WAY" was able to talk of anything else the next day. At luncheon

tables everywhere conversation began and ended in discussion of the big play at the Stuyvesant.

Perhaps the most debatable feature of the piece is its boldness. Mr. Walter took "a peculiar phase of New York life" as he found it, and poured it upon the stage, undiluted and unadulterated. He neither evaded nor avoided, and the result is a picture accurate in details as well as in essentials, in the least important movement and the most important motive. Whoever knows the "peculiar phase" mentioned on the program must admit the absolute verity of "THE EASIEST WAY." Whoever does not will believe it a vicious exaggeration of extremely uncommon conditions. It is impossible to foresee the financial future of the play out of town. The persons introduced in the story, their ethics, their tendencies, their environment, are typically American to New York. They may be Greek to "the road."

However, truth is truth, recognized or unrecognized, and the power of "THE EASIEST WAY" is due to perfect blending of photographic and dramatic qualities. The play has you in its grip fifty seconds after the curtain rises. Laura Murdock is spending a few days' vacation with friends who live in the mountains of Colorado. She has been a member of a summer stock company in Denver, and Willard Brockton has come twenty-five hundred miles to escort her home to New York. It isn't long before you have placed Laura as one of those "actresses" for whom the stage is simply a shop window, who owe their public success to their private complaisance. Brockton has been taking care of her, and suggests attractive plans for their future, but Laura has fallen in love with a young newspaper reporter and intends to marry him. John Madison, the journalist in question, has led a life as unconventional as the girl's own, and is quite willing to accept her for what she is in spite of what she has been. Laura introduces him to Brockton, and the rivals sit in the gathering dusk, discussing the future of the one as foreshadowed by the past

of the other. Brockton asks Madison how much he is making. Madison admits that it is only thirty dollars a week, and Brockton warns him that he cannot hold Laura on that income. John refuses to believe luxury so necessary to his sweetheart. He agrees to notify Brockton if Laura ever leaves him, and Brockton, on his part, promises not to resume his relations with her without first apprising Madison. Night falls; the two cigars glow out of the darkness, and at last the curtain shuts off the parties to this singular combat.

The next act discloses Laura in the "second story back" of a cheap theatrical boarding house in New York. Madison is still in the West, trying to make his pile before he marries, and the young woman is fighting a losing fight with poverty in this squalid furnished room. It has proved impossible for her to obtain an engagement without the influence of Brockton; her good clothes have been pawned, and she is face to face with actual want. What doing without means to such a girl, soft, warm, delicate, accustomed to the best that money can buy, is made terribly clear in the course of her conversation with Jim Weston, a broken-down advance agent, whose lifetime regard for honesty has landed him in the same boat and boarding house to which Laura's experiment has brought her.

Soon afterwards there arrives upon the scene one Elfie St. Clair, a woman hardened and inured to the life that Laura had left. She meets her old friend's story with cynical disbelief in the reward of virtue. She has had her own experiences with men, has Elfie, and they have not been of a nature to make her trusting or sentimental. Her advice is Tenderloin for the excuses of Mrs. Warren, and it falls upon ears only too ready to listen. When the re-conversion is complete, Elfie discloses herself as the emissary of Brockton, who comes into the room, scattering hundred dollar bills like yellow leaves before the wind. Laura promises to go back to him, and Brockton, who has his own code, dictates a letter in fulfillment of

his agreement with Madison. No sooner has he disappeared, however, carrying Laura's promise to join him later at a Broadway restaurant, than she burns the letter. Then she throws herself wretchedly across her bed and the act is ended.

Two months later we see Laura in an "expensive hotel," amid souvenirs of the previous night's debauch. Brockton is present, and there is left no room for doubting that he is quite at home in these apartments. Laura has her long coveted part in a production soon to be made, and she has the luxuries for which she has given up everything else, but she is becoming miserably intolerant of her "protector" and terribly anxious about Madison. At this time there arrives a telegram announcing that John has made a fortune in mines, and is hurrying East to marry the woman he loves. He is due to arrive that afternoon. In the dialogue that follows, Brockton discovers that his missive has never been posted, and insists that Madison must know everything that has occurred. Laura pleads for her happiness, but her lover is adamant; he will grant nothing further than that the girl may tell the story herself. Once more he trusts her, leaving her to make her confession, and once more she weakens at the critical moment. Brockton returns to find that Madison, still undeceived, has gone to make preparations for the wedding.

It is an awful moment in the fourth act when Brockton takes the fulfillment of the compact into his own hands. John has returned from a visit to friends in Park Row, and has told Laura what they have hinted to him. Laura protests that she has kept faith. The comforts by which she is surrounded have been earned by her success in her profession. John has taken her word. And then the slam of the outside door of the apartment! Talk about suspense—about pulse-quickenings moments! Brockton's footsteps sound in the hall, his key opens the door, he enters, and silently, but with the manner of ownership, he walks across the parlor into the alcove bedroom beyond. An in-

stant later he comes back, and now John Madison knows.

He draws his revolver, but Laura springs in front of him, calling, "Don't shoot!" So Brockton goes free, and his mistress is left to face the consequences of having taken the easiest way. She pleads with Madison on her knees; she urges her helplessness, her weakness, her need. It is all to no avail; Madison cannot believe her again. Finally, she threatens suicide. "I will kill myself," she says, "if you pass out of that door." John calls the colored maid servant. "Miss Murdock has threatened to kill herself if I leave the house," he tells her. "I want you to be witness to the fact that she does it of her own free will." And he goes. Laura stands for a moment irresolute, and then the pistol drops from her hand. "To hell with them all!" she cries. "I'm going to Rec-tor's!"

THIS isn't exactly a pretty story, but it is a soul-stirring one, and if it isn't made to seem so in the telling the fault is all mine. So large a part of the excellence of the piece depends upon its treatment that it is practically impossible to induce a correct estimate by relating the plot. Indeed, the theme is simply "Iris," but the handling makes it quite original. Constructively, "THE EASIEST WAY" is every inch what I called it in my first paragraph—a great play. It is as direct as a rifle shot. In the entire work is not a superfluous word or an unnecessary situation. There is the closest possible sequence of incident, and the unities are absolute. Each act, each scene, each speech relates to one and the same thing. Only six persons are employed, and the movement is carried onward in a series of dialogues of surprising force and trenchancy. Mr. Walter has indulged in no fine writing, but his English is expressive, vigorous and full of character. "THE EASIEST WAY" demonstrates afresh my oft-repeated contention that virility is the first essential of good drama, and that, all else being equal, the man who would

make the best pugilist would make the best playwright.

Regarding the "morals" of the piece, it seems to me that there is nothing to be said. Personally, I am sick of discussing the "morals" of theatrical performances. We have had bad men and women on the stage ever since there has been a stage, and I suppose we shall go on having them, the virtue of the critics notwithstanding. The thoughtful man finds it difficult to understand why nobody complains of arson, robbery and murder as dramatic motives, setting aside as forbidden material only one of the seven deadly sins. To me the line dividing the offensive and the inoffensive seems to run, not between one kind of fault and another, but between the trifling and the serious, the gratuitous and the essential, the petty audacities and the fundamental truths. It seems incomprehensible that the same people who see evil in reverent dealing with the big things of life can discover nothing objectionable in the vulgar inanities and indecencies of modern farce and musical comedy. Mr. Walter certainly calls a spade a spade, but what is the benefit of alluding to it as a garden implement when everybody would have known that he meant a spade anyhow? I don't care for rosewater drama myself, and I don't think any author from Shakespeare to Upton Sinclair ever got anywhere by truckling to nasty-minded squeamishness and petty conventional morality. So endeth the first lesson.

Mr. Walter was extremely fortunate in having his wagon hitched to a Starr. A few years ago no lady was thought fit to play an emotional prostitute until she reached an age that would have been fatal in her business. The theatrical woman of uneasy virtue was always a big creature, who, at the right and proper moment, could weep and wail and bite pieces out of the counterpane. Frances Starr is the latest—and the realest—sort of unfortunate. There is a tremendous amount of appeal about her; one feels sorry for her even while he realizes that her misfortunes are mostly homemade. More-

over, Miss Starr is as natural as a summer shower. She acts without seeming to act, and she conveys unmistakably the impression of being the kind of woman who travels the path of the least resistance, who always and forever takes what promises to be the easiest way.

The five players who make up the remainder of the cast are almost uniformly excellent. Joseph Kilgour's brilliant portrayal of Brockton is perhaps the finest individual work of the presentation, but William Sampson, who was so generally appreciated as the "tin horn" gambler in "The Witching Hour," contributes a remarkable sketch of the advance agent, Jim Weston, and Laura Nelson Hall's Elfie St. Clair is a character study which might be made the subject of a two thousand word dissertation. Edward H. Robbins's Madison and Emma Dunn's colored maid are the least satisfactory delineations, but even they call for no specific complaint. Miss Dunn's work, in particular, suffers rather in comparison with her past achievements than by any other standard.

Eugene Walter, however, is the genius who looms big at the Stuyvesant. I had rather see "THE EASIEST WAY" ten times than go once to each of any other ten plays in town.

MRS. LESLIE CARTER's performance of "KASSA" at the Liberty Theater is just a performance, and nothing more. The story and its incidents have absolutely no parallel in human experience, and any woman of your acquaintance, or mine, who behaved as John Luther Long and Mrs. Carter make Kassa behave, would be sent to a lunatic asylum in short order. The play and the playing at the Liberty belong to the oldest and worst school of art, as those at the Stuyvesant belong to the newest and best, and the poles are not farther apart than the methods and standards of Forty-second Street and Forty-fourth.

I have mentioned as one of the merits of Mr. Walter's play that it has

no "situations for the sake of situations." "KASSA" has nothing else. All the stock "big scenes" from twenty screaming melodramas have been taken from the shelf, dusted and stuck anywhere in the structure of this theatrical antique. They are quite empty, being without adequate motive or reason, and they never excite anything beyond wonder that so much fuss should be made about so little. It takes more than words and lung power to create a great situation, and the most patient of auditors, quite willing to stand one machine-made climax, must feel that the author is rubbing it in when he provides a dozen of assorted sizes and varieties. Scarcely anything that won favorable consideration in "Camille," "La Tosca," "Zaza," "Fedora," "Adrea" and "Madame Butterfly" will be missed in the perfervid melodrama called "KASSA."

Mr. Long has invented a mythical country for his play, which is well in handling a story that ignores all limitations of time, place and common sense. Kassa of Kemisvar is doomed to get her to a nunnery, but listens to the siren voice of a pleasant young man named Bela Balvanossi, and, after going through a fake wedding ceremony, accompanies him to a house in the Wallenwold Mountains. (When writers go looking for mythical kingdoms, why do they never select one in which the people and localities have nice-sounding names?) There Kassa, deserted, waits and waits and waits, indulging herself in the conventional heart-wringing scenes with her boy all the time. Then Bela comes back, apparently for no better reason than to have a domestic row, and Kassa follows him to the home of the Imperial Chancellor, Zickros Varsova, where she accuses him and then tries to save him, in the good old-fashioned Sardou way. Finally she makes possible her lover's escape by telling the Chancellor that "I only am guil-tuh, guil-tuh!" and by appealing to that gentleman's passion for her, after which she turns on him and calls him "A coward—a lecherous, lascivious coward! Ha! Ha!"

Then she wanders back to the region of the convent, and dies there effectively in the center of the stage and the glare of a busy little spotlight.

As a specimen of physical endurance, Mrs. Carter's performance is greatly to be admired. An old friend of mine, manager of a Brooklyn theater 'way back in the '70's, used to say: "A good actor is a man you can hear in the last row of seats, and when you can hear him in the box office he's a damned good actor!" Judged by that standard, no woman on our stage can hold a megaphone to Mrs. Carter. Charles A. Millward and Robert Cummings, who portray Belas and Zickros, are the only two members of the supporting company who have more than a dozen lines to speak. The four stage settings shown are as elaborate and beautiful as anything ever revealed in New York, the first, representing the convent of Saint Lauka at daybreak, surpassing even the glorious picture devised by Harrison Grey Fiske for "Sappho and Phaon."

A deaf man would enjoy every moment of "KASSA."

As an antidote for Mrs. Carter's overwrought acting, drop into the Lyceum Theater some afternoon and see Eleanor Robson as Glad in Frances Hodgson Burnett's new comedy, "THE DAWN OF A TOMORROW." This is not only Miss Robson's best achievement in the way of characterization since her exquisite performance of "Merely Mary Ann," but the sweet, engaging personality of this very human young woman will refresh you after four hours of hectic emotionalism. Miss Robson has her artificial moments, but she is simplicity itself compared with most of the "great" stars of the day. It is an education in histrionism to watch her in the second act of Mrs. Burnett's little play, when she makes her sweetheart, Dandy, tell her the truth about a murder of which he is accused. Only an occasional break in her voice, a spasm of pain across her face, a tight closing of her hands convey her horror, her suffering, her doubt and then her relief.

In the same situation, Mrs. Carter would have paced the stage like a caged cougar, would have climbed all over Dandy and wept tons of salt water down the back of his neck.

The most overworked quotation in the world is that distorted line of Shakespeare's, who didn't mean what you mean when he said "The play's the thing." Well, at the Lyceum the play isn't the thing at all. It is the idea back of the play that will make "THE DAWN OF A TOMORROW" at least a passing success, in spite of what Mrs. Burnett doesn't know about dramatic writing. Mrs. Eddy's followers will call this idea Christian Science; short-haired spinsters will call it mental science, and ordinary people will understand that it is simply the common sense of the normal human being with a good liver. Glad's philosophy is summed up in the line: "There's always a tomorrow, and it's worth living for!" That's the kind of doctrine folks need and crave in this age of overfeeding, under-exercising and nerve wasting, and its optimism will give the piece a vogue that it could never have got from its dramatic virtues. You should have heard the first night audience applaud when Glad, unsoothed by the promise of a sheet, a harp and a halo after death, cried: "Tell me something that'll do me some good now, for I'm alive, an' I want to be took care of!"

The chief fault to be found with the play, as a play, is that it has two complete stories, and they don't telescope. The effect is the same you observe in the old-fashioned novel, in which Chapter XLI leaves off just as Dulcinea raised high the knife to plunge it into Ferdinand's heart, and Chapter XLII begins with a description of a progressive euchre party at the Pinckney-Brents'. Sir Oliver Holt, in "THE DAWN OF A TOMORROW," is told by his physicians that he has an incurable malady of the brain, and so he takes one of Liebler & Company's Personally Conducted Tours of the Slums (Liebler & Company also produced "The Battle"),

with the idea of shuffling off this mortal coil in an obscure spot.

The obscurest spot he can find, and the dirtiest, is Apple Blossom Court; but there he meets a waif of the streets, called Glad as an abbreviation of Gladys, who has her own troubles and a wonderful faith in the power of mind over matter. "Think of sumthin' else, an' keep movin'," she counsels Sir Oliver, and busies him so with her difficulties, and those of the wretched creatures about her, that he is on the highway to recovery when the final curtain falls. The second story concerns Glad's love for a tough character named Dandy, whom she supposes to have done robbery and murder in the West End. As a matter of fact, Glad's prayer has stopped him, as the scrubwoman's prayer stopped Jim Platt in "Salvation Nell." Glad finally proves this by working her mental science—and a very handy and material telephone—on a degenerate who asks her chastity as the price of establishing an alibi for her sweetheart.

Despite its superfluity of material, the piece is terribly thin and hard up for incident. Mrs. Burnett marks time when she might better be developing two or three of the sketchiest of her characters. And, when all is said and done, it isn't the "ask and ye shall receive" practice that helps her *dramatis personæ*, but the constant stretching of the long arm of coincidence. "The world's a small place," we are told, and London must be a smaller when a gentleman, taking a stroll in the East End—object suicide—pops straight into the arms of the girl his nephew wants to seduce.

Mrs. Burnett had a smashing big idea, and, as I remarked before, this idea and Miss Robson's acting make the performance well worth while, but there is nothing memorable about "THE DAWN OF A TOMORROW." The best explanation of this fact was given on the first night by a gentleman who sat in front of me.

"What's the matter with this play?" inquired his companion.

The gentleman thought she had

asked: "Who's the author of this play?"

"A woman wrote it," he said.

FRANCISQUE SARCEY once observed that "complete seriousness is the true essence of burlesque," and his dictum explains the fact that "THE VAMPIRE" is a lot funnier than "The Blue Mouse."

"THE VAMPIRE," like "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," and a host of other plays, which probably owe their origin to the success of "The Witching Hour," deals with the theory of "mind over matter." Unlike "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," this product of the adolescence of Edgar Allan Woolf and George Sylvester Viereck has no foundation in human or scientific possibility. It is the sort of piece that appeals to extremely ignorant or immature persons as being intellectual, and to grown-ups as a half-baked mess of fantastic nonsense. "Radium," says one of the characters in the "tragedy," "has made perpetual motion a reality." The rest of the play is on a par with that statement. I don't know how to give you a better idea of "THE VAMPIRE," which is not metaphysics, nor psychology, nor philosophy, and certainly is not drama.

The story of the offering now on view at the Hackett Theater concerns the theft of ideas by the laying on of hands. Paul Hartleigh resides among a job lot of writers and painters of a kind that would probably represent the idea of genius current in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Paul's own ability is on the wane, so he steals the thoughts of the men and women who come within reach of his magnetic fingers. Unfortunately, he selects as the chief victim of his brain-burglary, a young man named Caryl Fielding, who is beloved by Paul's own ward, Allene Arden. So Allene, who has her suspicions, sits up one night and catches Paul in the act of feloniously rubbing and robbing Caryl's cranium. Then she and Caryl go away, leaving poor old Paul to find new scalps to massage.

The fundamental idea of the play is not without possibilities—something of the same sort was made very interesting by Robert Hichens in "Flames"—but

it is rendered tiresome and ridiculous by the cheap cynicism, the bogus profundity and the pseudo-science of the Messrs. Woolf and Viereck. No one possessed of a sense of humor could see Caryl losing his wits by being patted on the head without feeling an impulse to laugh. "I wonder," said I to The Lady Who Goes to the Theater With Me, "if Ella Wheeler Wilcox is a strawberry blond because somebody drew 'Poems of Passion' through her hair? Also, if it would be easier to steal from Charlie Bigelow than from the Seven Sutherland Sisters, and whether the sensation of being robbed is anything like that of talking through your hat?"

"All trifling and beside the point," answered The Lady. "What I want to know is whether, if you put your hand on a dog's head, you are likely to write doggerel!"

Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to write a play!

Thus has some wit parodied Sir Walter Scott, and the line could not be used more appropriately than in connection with Edward Childs Carpenter's maiden effort (excepting only a dramatization of "The Sign of the Four"), produced by William Faversham at Daly's. Mr. Carpenter has a generous soul and a darned good memory, so that his offering, yclept "THE BARBER OF NEW ORLEANS," resembled "Kassa" in that it contained a little bit of everything. There were three or four love stories, a duel, a couple of mob scenes, and countless misunderstandings, sacrifices and other demonstrations of nobility. "THE BARBER OF NEW ORLEANS" would have appealed to any actor, if only because it had the busiest and most heroic hero who ever came to the aid of damsel in distress. It was pretty poor stuff, however, compared with "The World and His Wife," and was very properly shelved in favor of this great Spanish tragedy, after having had twenty-three—ominous number!—consecutive performances.

Mr. Faversham's portrayal of the Barber recalled the old swashbuckling days of his "Don Caesar," and his

skill as a producer was never better evidenced than in this presentment. Though dreadfully miscast, Julie Opp demonstrated new ability and adaptability in the role of a lovelorn maiden. After her present season in New York no one can remark of Mrs. Faversham that she is a leading woman by marriage!

WHATEVER else may be said of it, English musical comedy is always a gentleman. "KITTY GREY," at the New Amsterdam, provides a very mild sort of entertainment, but, like most examples of its species, it is delightful because of its manner, its refinement, its absolute freedom from noise, bustle and vulgarity. This piece, which is another adaptation from the French farce that supplied Dan Daly with "The Rounders," has the inestimable benefit of presenting George P. Huntley, whose droll personality is reinforced by real unction and carefully studied repose. Mr. Huntley's description of shrimps as "highly strung creatures, with a keen sense of humor," is the funniest piece of nature faking we have had since George Graves, in "The Little Michus," delved into the natural history of the Gazeeka.

Julia Sanderson returns to us in "KITTY GREY," and is just as pretty and unaffected as she was before she went to London. Valli Valli, who used to be a celebrated dancer, is another agreeable member of the organization. English lyrics are usually superior to our own, frequently being characterized both by good meter and good English, and sometimes having even more ingenious rhymes than "blue" and "true" and "love" and "dove." The verses in "KITTY GREY" are much above the average, one called "The Tract" being especially clever. The music is not exceptional, though there is charm in "If the Girl Wants You," "Mr. Soldier" and "Mlle. Pirouette." A much applauded number, "Just Good Friends," is amazingly reminiscent of a ballad which Miss Sanderson introduced in "The Dairy Maids." "KITTY GREY," summed up, is hardly

the equal of "The Girls of Gottenburg," but the performance is worth knowing for the same pleasure one derives from knowing witty and cultured people.

"A STUBBORN CINDERELLA" is neither the best nor the worst musical comedy that ever came out of the West, but it is unmistakably Chicago. The piece, which is at the Broadway, has moments of real humor, but, in general, its fun is of the primitive sort known as "rough house." The play begins outside a most remarkable college, proceeds to a stalled railway train in the mountains and ends during an orange fête in California.

The brightest spot in the performance—and even that spot isn't exactly incandescent—is a young woman named Alice Dovey, whose manner is sweet, and whose work refined and intelligent. She is quite the nicest little girl Chicago has sent us since Gertrude Millington came East with "The Royal Chef." Opinions of comedians differ more than opinions of motor cars, but I thought Jack Barrymore very amusing in his first low comedy part. A dreadful person named Robert Harrington reminded one of George Cohan at his worst. Some of the girls are pretty, but most of the chorus seems to have been picked the year the peach crop failed.

Two meteoric incidents of the month were the appearances of Digby Bell in "AN INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE," and of Joe Weber in "THE MERRY WIDOW AND THE DEVIL" at Weber's. The former play, which tarried only a few minutes, dealt with the familiar fallacy that no one can be a fine man or woman without being an American. That aged notion has caused us to be ridiculed by every visitor from Charles Dickens to Herbert W. Horwill, but we find it cropping up again this year as the mainspring of three or four spread-eagle comedies.

Blanche Ring proved to be the best reason for congratulating Mr. Weber. A manager is known by the company he keeps, and Miss Ring is *some* company!

THE LITERARY CLINIC

By H. L. MENCKEN

THREE books designed to reduce and mitigate the horrors of human existence are stretched upon the operating table and invite our exploratory surgery. The first is a treatise upon marriage in all its branches; the second is a tract upon the science of eating, and the third presumes to teach us how to sleep.

I shall lay bare the contents of the marriage guide first, because matrimony is a far more interesting topic than either eating or sleeping, even to the married man. It is, indeed, the most interesting topic in all the world, and not even death itself has a more chronic or more insidious fascination for the roving mind. This, I suppose, is because matrimony, while perpetually imminent and menacing, is yet a bit short of inevitable. If, for instance, we represent the probability of dissolution by the mathematical sign of infinity, then the probability of marriage will be infinity minus x —and in that elusive, immeasurable, intangible x lies half the joy of being alive. To the bachelor it is a symbol of hope, for he holds to a firm faith that he, personally, will escape. And to the spinster it is a sign of hope, too, for she clings to a faith equally firm that she, personally, will have no such bad luck. Thus each sex sees the nuptial ring as a gambler sees the spinning wheel—as something full of eternal chances and hazards, of unending “ifs” and “buts.”

Mrs. Maud Churton Braby has got some flavor of this magic mystery into “MODERN MARRIAGE, AND HOW TO BEAR IT” (Kennerley, \$1.25).

One hurries on for page after page, forced ever onward by a feverish ex-

pectation that the solution will be found in the next chapter—and then, of a sudden, comes “The End,” and the whole problem is left hanging in mid-air. “Be very tolerant,” says Mrs. Braby in conclusion; “expect little, give gladly, put respect before everything, cultivate courtesy—and love one another all you can.” A fair Daniel come to judgment!

Mrs. Braby, of course, does not arrive at this banal verdict without some show of hearing and discussing a lot of evidence and argument. She has chapters upon all the minor divisions of the main problem, and in one place she weighs several proposed substitutes for monogamy. Of the latter the most interesting is a scheme she calls duogamy. It contemplates a *ménage* of four—two wives and two husbands. Tiring of the excellent but soulless cooking of Wife No. 1, Husband No. 1 may move across the hall to the lair of Wife No. 2, whose talent is for piano playing and philosophy. Meanwhile, it is presumed, Husband No. 2 has grown weary of Chopin and Nietzsche, and is ready, both physically and psychically, for a course of Irish stew and hot waffles. Mrs. Braby discusses this plan discreetly, in the form of a parable—and then quite abruptly dismisses it. No doubt she suddenly remembers, on reflection, that it has been tested in recent years by many a valiant hero of research almost as thoroughly as monogamy, and found to be just as unsatisfactory.

One puts down the book with keen regret that Mrs. Braby has nothing more promising to offer. West of the Adriatic the matrimonial problem

presses painfully, and the shrieks of those doomed to wrestle with it mount daily to high heaven. Between celibacy tempered by polygamy, and monogamy tempered by vain regret, there is little choice and no middle ground. And, as everyone knows, both leave much to be desired. The first, indeed, is fast becoming dangerous to life and limb, and the second is often too horrible to contemplate.

The eating book is by that perennial philosopher and master of all the arts, Upton Sinclair, and the words upon its title page are: "GOOD HEALTH AND HOW WE WON IT" (Stokes, \$1.20). In the writing of the book Mr. Sinclair had the aid of Michael Williams, who is also offered as a sort of Exhibit A in proof of its argument. Mr. Sinclair, it appears, is a food faddist of a tolerant and magnificent sort. That is to say, he is in favor of every professor who offers something unpleasant, no matter what may be the precise nature of his offering. Thus he gives a hearty "Aye!" to Professor Fletcher, the multi-chewer; and another to Professor Metchnikoff, the poet of skimmed milk and sauerkraut; and yet another to Professor Mendel, the Sherlock Holmes of the deadly milk can. In the end he strikes a sort of average, and evolves thereby a scientific bill of fare made up, in the main, of zweibach, eggs and embalmed raisins, with Battle Creek breakfast foods on the side.

Mr. Sinclair says that these things have made him as frisky as a three-year-old, and that, not many years ago, they saved the life of Mr. Williams. The reader, of course, will accept this statement with respect, but it is possible that, in a meditative moment, the thought may occur to him that, had Messrs. Sinclair and Williams embraced instead of scorned the felonious beefsteak, the former, today, might have been as frisky as a two-year-old, or even a one-year-old, and the latter, instead of being merely alive, might have been almost immortal. Seriously, Mr. Sinclair offers no proof whatever that his awe-inspiring diet is fit food for

human beings. All he proves is that, eating it *and living in the open air in Bermuda*, he has managed to keep well. The answer to that is that any man living in the yellow sunlight of Bermuda is apt to keep well, whether his dinners be made up of breakfast foods or of lobsters à la Newburg.

Next comes the Rev. Lyman P. Powell, with a treatise on "THE ART OF NATURAL SLEEP" (Putnam, \$1). Mr. Powell sprang into the limelight a few years ago with an excellent, if somewhat savage, counterblast to Christian Science, but since then the Emmanuel Movement has ensnared him, and today he preaches a system of therapy which is just as magical as Christian Science, and just as notable for astounding assumptions and extraordinary conclusions.

The Powell cure for insomnia, like the Eddy cure, depends for its usefulness upon the anesthetic effect of theology. Put any man into a comfortable seat and begin preaching at him—and in ten minutes he will grow drowsy. This is a fact as familiar and as indubitable as the fact that all bipeds have two feet. It is proved anew in our houses of worship every Sabbath morning. Mr. Powell, however, offers two valuable improvements upon the ordinary method of turning it to account. In the first place, he substitutes a comfortable Morris chair for the customary church pew, which is hard and uncomfortable; and in the second place, he advises that the theology be recited in "a low monotone," which must be far more effective, it is plain, than the nasal elocution of the average ecclesiastic.

As for the actual spell that Mr. Powell recommends to operators, it is quite frankly reminiscent of that Eddian formula which he so joyfully lambasted in his former book: "Universal Mind or Universal Spirit is wholesomeness and love, harmony and power . . . It is possible, in the exercise of the free will with which you are in the nature of the case endowed, to fill up the soul with morbidness . . . so that there is

no room in it for God's wholesomeness . . . (A stanza of nebulous poetry here) . . . You do not sleep because you are all replete with the very "Thou" . . . If this is not Christian Science, from the original pellucid fount, I offer my most humble apologies and abject obeisance to the reverend gentleman.

Of course, there is a kernel of truth in all this transcendental juggling with words. It lies in the fact that a low, monotonous murmur, by distracting the mind from the ideas which engage it, without offering any other intelligible idea in their place, produces drowsiness. If you doubt this, stretch yourself out upon a couch and have someone begin reading the table of logarithms to you, or a column of want ads., in a muffled, mysterious voice. Believe me, either of these things will put you to sleep just as quickly and just as soundly as Mr. Powell's catalogue of dubious dogmas.

Richard G. Badger, of Boston, is the only American publisher who pays steady heed to poets. He seems to love them, and this love of his includes the bad as well as the good, the writers of Christian Endeavor hymns as well as the bards of passion and despair. Once a week, or even oftener, he casts out his net, and always when he pulls it in there is a new rhymester wriggling in its meshes.

Naturally enough, the genius of most of these poets is of the ultra-violet sort, and so lies beyond our brute perceptions, but now and then Badger ensnares one whose song is worth hearing. His latest prize is Henry Percival Spencer, author of "THE LILIES," and a very passable rhapsodist. Spencer's philosophy is stale and some of his stanzas are nothing more than prose chopped up into lengths, but now and then he produces a couplet or a single line that sings itself into the memory.

Exhibit A:

And morning brushed aside her veil
And rose, still blushing at her dream.

Exhibit B:

The ghosts of stars are in the morn.

It is my private opinion that Exhibit A, had it flashed one wintry day through the head of old Ben Jonson, would have made him glow with inward sunlight. And Exhibit B, I fancy, would have given a thrill of joy to—but you had better fill in the name yourself.

No, Spencer is not a gem of purest ray serene, but neither is his poetizing a waste of time. If he keeps at it, I venture to predict, and learns to be more wary of mere words, he will win no mean place as a poet.

A bard of a different sort is William Stanley Braithwaite, author of "THE HOUSE OF FALLING LEAVES" (Luce, \$1.25). Spencer offers us a mixture of extremes; Braithwaite sticks to the middle ground. That is to say, he is a safe and sane metricalist, whose verse is always graceful and workmanlike and always devoid of inspiration. At the end of his book he thanks God, in rhyme, for "the great gift of song," but his gratitude, I fear, is rather gratuitous. He mistakes, in brief, the impulse to write poetry for the divine afflatus itself. The two things are separate and distinct.

Gloom is Braithwaite's customary mood, and this is the case, too, with Charles Hanson Towne, author of "THE QUIET SINGER" (Dodge, \$1.25). But there the resemblance ends, for Towne is greatly the better workman, and to his craftsmanship he adds more than once a spark of the true fire. This is most apparent, perhaps, in some of his shorter pieces—in particular, in a group of eight quatrains. Here we have eight almost perfect miniatures. They leave a sense of fleeting, half-seen beauty—a feeling of dim, indefinable pleasure. Father Tabb might have written them.

In a sequence of eleven short songs Mr. Towne tries to show us the poetry in New York's blatant but magnificent roar. Here his choice of form handicaps him, just as it did Charles G. D. Roberts, in "New York Nocturnes," before him. The song of New York is not for the lyric reed pipe and ex-

quisite rhyme; it demands, as it were, elbow room and a voice of brass. Whether or not a Homer will ever rise up to give it form is beyond prognostication. Meanwhile, it is something to have these modest but melodious attempts.

An excellent antitoxin for the Fourth of July orator is Professor Barrett Wendell's "THE PRIVILEGED CLASSES" (*Scribners*, \$1.25). It is Professor Wendell's idea that the only privileged class in the United States, in the true meaning of the term, is that class whose members belong to trades unions. What is a privileged class? It is "a body of people permitted by custom, and often by positive law as well, not only to enjoy immunities of various kinds from the political and social burdens borne by the generality of their compatriots, but also to possess opportunities for various agreeable careers from which unprivileged mortals are debarred." Well, just consider your typical union man. Isn't he a member of a close corporation, whose only discernible object is to stamp out all free competition and make its members superior to the laws of natural selection and supply and demand? Professor Wendell thinks so, and it may be said for him that he comes dangerously near proving his case. The chief aim of every union, indeed, is to protect and defend incompetence, which is always punished, outside the union ranks, by swift and heavy penalties. In the whole history of unionism in America there are not a dozen instances of a union making any effort, direct or indirect, to improve the professional efficiency of its members—say, by expelling those who are notoriously incompetent. On the contrary, all the money collected is employed in forcing the general public to take their efficiency for granted. If it actually existed, there would be little complaint, but, as Professor Wendell shows, it is often largely theoretical.

The difference between the coddled workman and the malefactor of swollen fortune is that the latter has no stand-

ing in law. In a word, he is officially a criminal, and very often he actually goes to jail. But the union man's right to exploit and pillage the public is protected by statute. If, through his drunkenness, laziness or blundering, he injures a fellow workman, he is held immune—and his employer must pay the bill. In some States, indeed, the employer must pay for it when the workman injures *himself*, and Mr. Roosevelt has long advocated that this extraordinary law be made national. It is just such profiting by special laws that constitutes the essence of privilege. The man who merely breaks the law is always vulnerable, but the man whose offense is protected by law cannot be reached and punished until the law that protects him is first overturned. Sometimes this overturning is accomplished by orderly processes, but at other times, as in the case of the French Revolution—a very typical effort to destroy privilege—its destruction involves a political cataclysm.

In his "ASPECTS OF MODERN OPERA" (*Lane*, \$1.25), Lawrence Gilman maintains the thesis that Debussy's "Pelleas and Melisande" is a music drama which carries out the plans of Richard Wagner better than Wagner was ever able to carry them out himself. The Sage of Bayreuth, says Mr. Gilman, made a gallant and constant effort to subordinate his music to his drama, but ever and anon a luscious tune began to buzz in his ears, and, for all his struggles, he couldn't keep it off his music paper. In Debussy there is no such amiable weakness. With him the play is the thing from curtain to curtain, and he never stops the action to tickle our ears with high C's. At critical moments, indeed, he silences his orchestra altogether, and irons out the melodic line in his voice parts so resolutely that it recalls the haunting pedal point of an auctioneer.

There is a good deal of truth in Mr. Gilman's argument, but far from proving that Debussy is Wagner's superior, it may merely prove that Wagner's

art theories were and are impracticable. It is all well enough to talk of reducing the music to the level of the scenery and the strophes, but, all the same, people go to opera houses, not to look at back drops and gestures, but to hear singing—to hear the soaring, super-delicious wolf tones of the tenor, the sweet shrieks of the soprano and the genial grunts of the gentlemen of Brabant. In those melodramas which have an accompaniment of shiver music for every foul stab and sigh of love the art theories of Wagner are put into execution with absolute and unmerciful literalness, and yet civilized folks cannot be induced to enjoy such plays, despite their vast superiority in sentiment, logic and morals to the ordinary run of grand opera librettos.

But why repine? Mr. Gilman may be wrong—and then again he may be right. Right or wrong, he writes most interestingly, and if one can't quite accept his valuation of Debussy it is still possible to get a lot of instruction out of those other chapters in his book which deal with the Wagner influence and "Salome."

"STOKES'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS," by L. J. de Bekker (*Stokes*, \$3), is a 750-page book which effectively bridges the gap between the small music dictionaries and the monumental library of Grove. It is addressed to the layman rather than to the professional musician, and so it devotes a good deal of space to opera plots, conductors and the parlor composers, and comparatively little to the more elusive problems of composition. The field covered by the book is enormous, and the number of articles and definitions is probably not far from 12,000. When it is noted that, with all this comprehensiveness and within his restricted space Mr. de Bekker presents complete lists of the works of all the principal composers, living and dead, the unmerciful assiduity of his condensation may be appreciated. Now and then, of course, this makes his definitions fragmentary and unsatisfactory, and at other times it beguiles him into phrases that are

downright misleading, as in his definition of "episode," for instance. Again, there are omissions. Where is Max Reger? Where is Coleridge-Taylor? But these faults are few, and the earlier musical dictionaries have them in more lavish profusion. Compared to these earlier books, the present one seems very well done indeed. The binding is plain and tough.

My colleague, Mr. Pollock, has already told you in a previous issue of this magazine of the sad blight that fell upon Charles Rann Kennedy's second play, "THE WINTERFEAST," when it was presented on Broadway. Now that it has appeared in book form (*Harpers*, \$1.25), the causes of this catastrophe become plain—and it also becomes plain that Mr. Kennedy is a writer of parts. "The Servant in the House" was an excellent pulpit harangue, but a lumbering and unconvincing play. Some of its faults—its prolixity, for example—appear again in "THE WINTERFEAST," but in many ways the latter drama shows a great advance. Its plan is sound, its climaxes are handled with some skill, and there are good touches, now and then, in the dialogue. The insuperable objection to it, as a stage play, lies in the fact that the great American theater audience has no interest whatever in the obscure psychology of the medieval Icelanders it portrays.

It is agreeable to see so many contemporary plays issuing forth between covers. As soon as we develop a public for printed dramas we shall develop a drama above the taste of the drowsy *kaufleute* in the orchestra and family circle. But the publishers are working against this desirable consummation by printing and binding their plays too expensively. In France and Germany a contemporary native play, in paper covers, costs a quarter or half a dollar, and translations sell for as little as five cents. Lovers of the drama buy these cheap pamphlets and then have ten or a dozen of them bound together. In the United States the average contemporary play, in insubstantial cloth,

costs 75 cents, and some are sold for as much as \$1.50. Such prices are inexcusably excessive.

A dramatic critic of sober virtues is Montrose J. Moses, who has just published "HENRIK IBSEN: THE MAN AND HIS PLAYS" (Kennerley, \$1.50). Moses has tried to write, not a book of impressions, but a book of facts, and he has succeeded unusually well. In his 522 pages there is everything about Ibsen that anyone, at any time, could ever desire to know. It is an Ibsen encyclopedia, a library, a literature boiled down. We have Halvorsen's minute bibliography reduced to footnotes and Archer's multitudinous introductions done into plain English. Every Ibsen performance of note is here recorded; every incident of Ibsen's life is here set down; everything ever said of an Ibsen play, in any civilized tongue, is here mentioned. And, withal, Mr. Moses has made a readable book, full of safe and sound criticism. An ambitious plan and an excellent performance.

In "FIGHTING THE TURK IN THE BALKANS," by Arthur D. Howden Smith (Putnam, \$1.50), we have a lucid and straightforward explanation of one subdivision of the Balkan puzzle by a man who took the trouble to go to Macedonia and look into it for himself. Mr. Smith, indeed, actually shouldered a musket, and, as an unofficial member of a war party of Macedonian patriots, discharged it more than once at the terrible Turk. It is his evident belief that his friends acted bravely, and even nobly, in the encounters he describes, but many a reader will fail to follow him to this conclusion. As a matter of fact, one is more apt to get from his book a notion that the Macedonians are a horde of frowzy, bombastic ruffians, made up of one part comic opera tenor and two parts Paris Apache. Mr. Smith's band began operations by setting fire to a house in which half a dozen Turks were penned, and then proceeded to a career of ambush and assassination. Only once did they fight

a stand-up fight—and that time they were walloped.

The story is told in good journalese, and Mr. Smith does not overburden it with moral reflections. It makes, indeed, a sort of true dime novel, and recalls vividly those hair-raising volumes which Richard Harding Davis used to write in his days of devilish daring.

Maxim Gorky's new novel, "THE SPY" (Heubsch, \$1.50), is a pretentious, but rather unimpressive, study of the Russian revolution. The hero, a dreaming, unwholesome country boy, is tossed into the underworld of a large Russian city, and becomes, by a series of accidents, a member of the secret police. Spying upon revolutionaries, he soon acquires a bit of their fine frenzy himself, and the clash of impulse and duty that follows is too much for him. In the end, after a futile running amuck, he kills himself.

The chief interest of the story lies, not in the hero's sufferings, but in the picture of Russian life unfolded. This picture, it must be admitted, is marked by many bold and sure touches, and now and then one feels the old horror of "Lodgings for the Night." But more often Gorky's effects are built up in the good old, obvious, stop-look-listen style of Poe, and so they fail to horrify. Of that epic sweep, that tremendous reality and significance, that deep understanding of the human brute so conspicuous in "Germinal," one finds scarcely a trace. Gorky, indeed, is to Zola as a wart is to Ossa.

"THE SOVEREIGN GOOD," by Helen Huntington (Putnam, \$1.50), belongs to a class of novels better known in England than in America. "Dodo" is the archetype of this class, and in every member of it there is some striving for Mr. Benson's pessimistic wit, and some show of his intimate familiarity with what Anglomaniac Frenchmen call *hig leef*. And the final note in these books is always that of refined, gentlemanly despair. In "Dodo," Jack rings Lady Chesterford's bell, and—"Her

Serene Highness left for Paris this morning." In "THE SOVEREIGN GOOD" the hero and heroine, their romance done, meet by chance at dinner, and—"He thought he had never seen just that look in a woman's eyes. It haunted him a little afterwards."

The great objection to these books is that they lead us nowhere, and throw no light whatever upon the bitter problems of human life. Their heroes and heroines are no more typical, even in their own narrow circles, than so many strangers from remote planets. To Pendennis our hearts warm because he is the eternal young man, and to Barry Lyndon because he is the eternal rascal, and to Nana because she is the eternal Magdalen, but our interest in the Dodos is always remote and objective, since we never meet them. Fidelia

King, in "THE SOVEREIGN GOOD," is of that sort. She is a woman of thirty-three in love with a boy of twenty-one—and somehow her love never seems quite real. By straining a bit, perhaps one may manage to accept the central fact, but a brief acquaintance with the boy turns it into a mere fantasy. As Mrs. Huntington has drawn the two, indeed, the impossibility of their romance is apparent from the start, and in consequence most of the matter that goes between curtain and curtain fails to arouse curiosity and interest. The story is conceivable, true enough, but if that were a sufficient test even the wooden images that people the pages of Jules Verne would seem human. A true novel must be more than merely conceivable: it must be plausible and probable. And these things "THE SOVEREIGN GOOD" is not.



THE BOOK OF THE HEART—

by Melanie Alice Weil. (*Library Shelf*, 75 cents)

A book of rather banal epigrams, decorated by an unnamed artist of exquisite taste and printed by an unnamed master of the art typographical.

HELEN AYR—

by F. Sidney Hayward. (*Cochrane*, \$1.50)

A curious medieval romance, in which Mr. Roosevelt's sanguinary war upon the Malefactors is described in the form of an allegory.

THE PERSECUTION OF STEPHEN STRONG—

by Rev. C. E. Babcock, Ph.D. (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1)

The story of a preacher's row with his congregation. Comforting reading for the Devil and the excommunicated.

BANZAI—

by "Parabellum." (*Baker-Taylor*, \$1.50)

A somewhat labored account of a Japanese invasion of the United States. Fortunately, the rubber-stamp love story which commonly accompanies yarns of this sort is absent.

THE SMART SET

ORATORY OF THE SOUTH—

Edited by E. DuB. Shurter. (*Neale*, \$3)

An excellent selection from the harangues of the sub-Potomac spellbinders. Proctor Knott's famous Duluth speech and other delicious things are included.

THE OPEN AIR—

by Richard Jefferies. (*Lippincott*, \$1.50)

A series of tone-poems without music upon the charm of all-outdoors. The scenes are English, but the appeal is to all who love open spaces and the good red sun.

BARSELMA'S KISS—

by Marion Beveridge Lee. (*Clark*, \$1.50)

A very bad novel, with an agreeable portrait of the fair author as a frontispiece.

THE BOOK OF WINTER SPORTS—

Edited by Edgar and Madge Syers. (*Arnold*, \$3)

A veritable encyclopedia of skating, tobogganing, skiing and ice yachting. The various articles are written by experts and there are many illustrations. Altogether an excellent book.

MARION—

by Florence Taylor Haselden. (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1)

A sentimental novelette without the slightest discernible excuse for existence.

THE HIGHER LIFE IN ART—

by John La Farge. (*McClure*, \$5)

A most interesting and valuable statement of a great artist's creed. Mr. La Farge writes almost as well as he paints. On every page there is keen and sound criticism.

CORRIE WHO?—

by Maximilian Foster. (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50)

A story of mystery, told with humor and probability. Well above the average of its class.

THE AMERICAN AS HE IS—

by Nicholas Murray Butler. (*Macmillan*, \$1)

An attempt, in three essays, to analyze the American type and temperament. Written for foreigners, but of considerable interest at home. Full of shrewd insight and sound logic.

HEALTH, STRENGTH AND HAPPINESS—

by C. W. Saleeby, M.D. (*Kennerley*, \$1.50)

A book of sound advice to laymen, by a physician eminent in his trade and with a gift for clear writing.

Why stir up the Dust Demon to Frenzy like this?



Which Do You Do In Your House— PACK DIRT IN? OR LIFT IT OUT?

When you use broom or carpet-sweeper, you scatter a large part of the dirt over a wider area, to be rehandled again and again; but that is not all of the evil.

Another large part of the dirt you work deep down into the carpet, there to decompose and putrify, to become the breeding place of germs and insects and to fill the house with musty and sour odors.

With such primitive implements, you simply can't help it, for that is their **constant tendency**, the absolutely necessary result of the **downward pressure** exerted by their every stroke.

Every time you use broom or carpet-sweeper, your every effort drives dirt down into the carpet deeper and deeper, and steadily adds new layers, until the fabric is **packed**.

And that is why you have to renovate.

It is true that the Vacuum System of cleaning is the only absolutely dustless system; but a large part of its remarkable efficiency is due to the fact that its **constant tendency is exactly opposite** to that of broom and carpet-sweeper.

Whereas broom and carpet-sweeper pack in the dirt even more solidly, the Ideal Vacuum Cleaner **lifts out**, by its suction force, more and more dirt from lower and lower depths. This it does constantly and always.

In other words, Ideal Vacuum Cleaning removes all the dirt that has been ground into the fabric as well as that which lies loosely on the surface, undoing with every application the evil of broom and carpet-sweeper.

And that is why the Ideal Vacuum Cleaner renovates every time it cleans.

The Ideal Vacuum Cleaner

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**Operated By
Hand**

"It Eats Up the Dirt"

**Or Electric
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The **IDEAL VACUUM CLEANER** is the great Vacuum Cleaning principle brought to its ideal state of economy and efficiency and **made practical and possible for all**. Weighing only 20 pounds, it is easily carried about. Operated either by hand or little motor connected with any electric light fixture, it requires neither skill nor strength. Compared with sweeping it is no work at all.

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pests are removed, the destruction of fabrics is arrested, and the causes of disease are banished.

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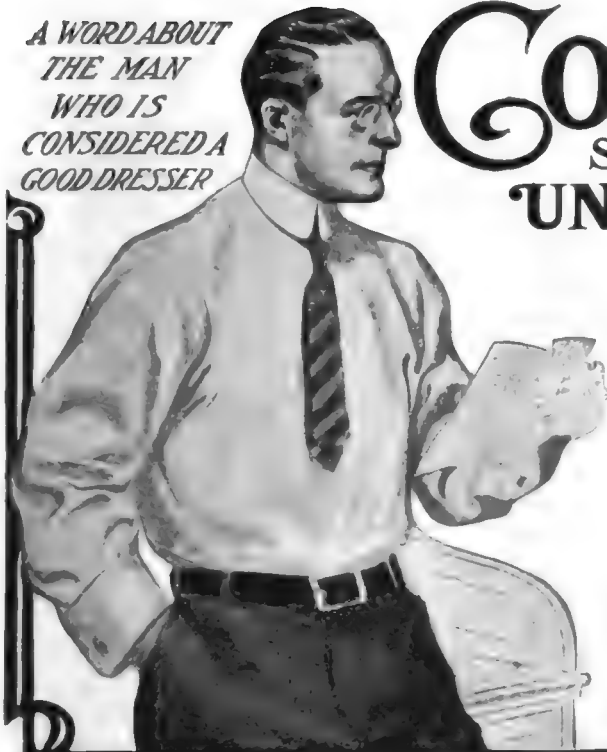


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The reviews of the newest books and the criticisms of the latest plays presented on the New York stage, which have been features of THE SMART SET during the past year or more, have attracted the widest interest. A concise presentation of what is to be found in the current magazines, it is believed, will prove of immense value to many embarrassed patrons of the news-stands throughout the country.

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LAUGHTER—A Poem..... John Kendrick Bangs
THE SILENCE OF MEN—A Novellette.....
H. F. Prevost Battersby
HER KINGDOM..... Charles Neville Buck
IN AMBUSH..... Marie Van Vorst
THE SHADOWY THIRD..... Prince Troubetskoy
IN UNISON—A Poem..... Clinton Scollard
THE TENTH SUBSCRIPTION..... Mary B. Mullet
IN LIMELIGHT AND FIRELIGHT..... Kate Jordan
THE LAST LAP..... Daniel Steele
NEW YORK NIGHT ADVENTURES..... Caroline Duer
CHOICE—A Poem..... Martha McCulloch-Williams
PLAYS AND PLAYERS..... A. First Nighter
FOR BOOK LOVERS..... Archibald Lowery Sessions

AMERICAN MAGAZINE

COVER DESIGN..... Arthur S. Covey
ON HEARING NEGRO GIRLS SING—A Poem..... Harry H. Kemp
ADVENTURES OF A SOMNAMBULIST..... Samuel Hopkins Adams
WHERE EVERY PENNY COUNTS..... Ida M. Tarbell
THE GOD-LONESOME MAN IN BRASSTOWN VALLEY..... Mrs. L. H. Harris
THE TRAWLER..... James B. Connelly
COMMODORE VANDERBILT AND THE HAND-MADE GENTLEMEN..... Irving Bacheller
THE YELLOW LEAF—A Poem..... Sarah N. Cleghorn
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T. R..... Edwin Lefevre
YAM AZAKI..... Octavia Roberts
EVERY DAY..... James Oppenheim
"THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH"..... William Allen White
LETTERS FROM G. G..... George Fitch
TAPT.....
THE PILGRIM'S SCRIP.....
IN THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE.....

CENTURY MAGAZINE

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES IN THE WHITE HOUSE..... Margarita Spalding Gerry
MR. OPP..... Alice Hegan Rice
THE PERSONALITY OF THE NEW PRESIDENT..... James A. Le Roy
TAPT AS ADMINISTRATOR.....
TURNING POINTS IN MR. TAPT'S CAREER..... Calvin Dill Wilson
OUR PRESIDENTS OUT OF DOORS.....
LEIPSIC, THE HOME OF FAUST..... Robert Haven Schauffler
QUEEN VICTORIA AS SEEN BY AN AMERICAN..... Kate Douglas Wiggin
PENELOPE IN VENICE.....
FOUNDATIONS OF LOFTY BUILDINGS..... Frank W. Skinner
SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT OWN ITS EM-BASSIES?..... Gen. Horace Porter
PUBLIC MORALITY AND STREET RAILWAYS..... Frederick W. Whitridge
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 THE HEIGHT—A Poem..... Arthur Stringer
 OWNERS OF AMERICA—VIII. THE SWIFTS..... Emerson Hough
 THE DAWN OF THE COTTON CENTURY..... Dan el J. Sully
 TEMPUS FUGIT..... Bruno Lessing
 IN HER FOOTSTEPS..... Arthur McEwen
 ART AND AMERICAN SOCIETY..... Mabelle Gilman Corey
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 PASSERS-BY—Conclusion—A Novel..... Anthony Partridge
 ONE NIGHT WITH THE BIG FLEET..... Richard Barry
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 THE DECEIT OF RUFUS..... Edwin Bliss
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 "LESSER BREEDS WITHOUT THE LAW"..... "Little Johnny"

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 THE POSTPONED ROMANCE..... George Randolph Chester
 AS TO OURSELVES..... William Hanna Thomson, M. D.
 THE NEED OF CHANGE..... Julian Street
 THE WOMAN'S INVASION (V.)..... William Hard; Rheta Childe Dorr, Collaborator
 OCTOPODOUSA FEROX..... Rowland Thomas
 OUR DUST—Verse..... Lydia Schuyler
 THE TITLE MARKET (Chapters V-VIII)..... Emily Post
 THE TREEING OF MRS. KILDEE..... Harriet Whitney Durbin
 THE FUGITIVE..... Georgina S. Townsend
 ABOUT "THE SHADOW WORLD".....
 THE PLAYERS..... Charles Somerville
 WHEN TRAGEDY GRINS..... I. B. Kerfoot
 A ROW OF BOOKS.....
 UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE.....

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 ON THE TRAIL OF THE GHOST..... Vance Thompson
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 HUNTING AHEAD OF ROOSEVELT IN EAST
 AFRICA (Second Article)..... Captain Fritz Duquesne
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 NIGHT RIDING IN THE BLACK PATCH..... Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.
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 SIVES ON OUR BATTLESHIPS..... Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans
 THE APRON OF GENIUS..... Earl Derr Biggers
 LA FOLLETTE, POLITICAL EVANGELIST..... O. K. Davis
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 PEACHERS AND THE STAGE..... Arthur Morrison
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THE FOUNTAIN LIGHT. Fielding Hall
THE SIMPLE FIELD THAT I SHALL BUY—A Poem. Mildred McNeal-Sweeney
EVIDENCE AGAINST ALCOHOL. Professor M. A. Ross

(Continued on page 14)

THE SMART SET FOR APRIL

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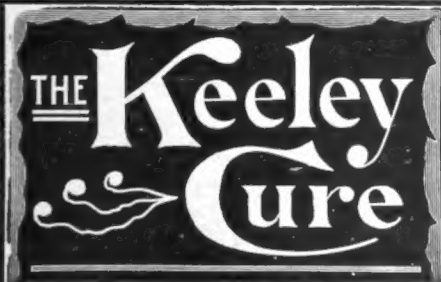
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